

Randolph DTC - Diana DiZoglio for State Auditor

Our tri-town area has excessive PFAS in our drinking water, like reservoirs across Massachusetts. What can you or the Commonwealth do to help with paying for filtering to remove PFAS, and running outside testing to identify PFAS sources?

We must be vigilant in continuing our fight to educate about PFAS substances in food, food packaging, firefighting foam and gear and other products, in addition to setting strict standards on the contaminants allowed in water systems. I am the [lead Senate sponsor of S1576](#) “An Act relative to the reduction of certain toxic chemicals in firefighter personal protective equipment” which is a priority bill of Massachusetts Clean Water Action. Specifically, my bill would, as of January 1, 2023, require manufacturers to notify purchasers if PFAS is present in firefighting personal protective equipment. As of Jan 1, 2025, this bill bans the manufacture or sale of firefighting personal protective equipment with intentionally added PFAS. We must ensure we are regulating the use of PFAS in the Commonwealth alongside funding efforts to filter and test. As a Senator, I created the Merrimack River District Commission charged with bringing stakeholders together to address challenges [pertaining to both funding and policy pertaining to combined sewage overflows \(CSOs\), PFAS and other public health and safety concerns surrounding not just the Merrimack River](#) but all rivers in the Commonwealth. Through these efforts, we learned more about dangerous forever chemicals, such as PFAS, being present along our waterways and seeping into our water supply. I am proud to have the endorsement of Julian Cyr, the Senate Chair of the PFAS Interagency Task Force, who I have worked with extensively with him on these matters.

As a legislator, I have worked diligently in our communities to protect the health and well-being of residents by filing and helping to pass important legislation on these matters, including efforts to increase funding. I continue this fight for clean water, having co-sponsored amendments for PFAS treatment projects in the Commonwealth such as A \$3 million investment for PFAS water improvements at UMass and another \$1.5 million investment to DPH for staff and technical assistance and services around PFAS mitigation.

As Auditor, I will be able to use the knowledge and wisdom gained through my years of work alongside groups like the Merrimack River Watershed Council, Mass Rivers Alliance, Clean Water Action and others, to deepen the work of the office – as well as shine a light on the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs – to increase accountability for the appropriation of funds for clean water efforts, including issues such as PFAS.

Our town government has been promised ARPA money and infrastructure money, like municipalities across Massachusetts. But the money is slow in coming, especially through Norfolk County. What can you or the Commonwealth do to help expedite this "emergency

funding" so we can actually spend it on emergency needs?

We must ensure that this much-needed infusion of federal funding gets to the families and communities that need it most. I am the only candidate in this race with a legislative voting record on this issue and have already begun addressing transparency and accountability surrounding ARPA funding in the legislature. (You can see my remarks from the floor debate [here](#).) It would provide a user-friendly tracking system and website through which the public may access, in near real-time, the amount and percentage, by spending category, of funds appropriated under this act spent in communities that were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. As Auditor, I have committed to continuing these efforts by actively analyzing, auditing, and reporting on the expenditure of federal stimulus, ARPA and other COVID-related funding to ensure they are used effectively and efficiently.

Randolph qualifies as an "environmental justice community" and might qualify as a "gateway city" and numerous other special designations. But we have trouble finding applicable grants through MAPC and other state agencies, while other wealthier towns and larger cities seem to always beat us to every grant. What can you or the Commonwealth do to help with "municipal equity" in state programs?

I grew up in environmental justice communities, I currently live in an environmental justice community and, for 10 years, have represented environmental justice communities at the State House. I know the challenges they face because I have personally seen them in my neighborhood. As I detailed earlier, I know what it takes to fight the powerful interests trying to take advantage of these communities – whether through taking on Columbia Gas regarding their mistreatment of Lawrence or fighting against a new natural gas plant in my hometown of Methuen.

In addition, as you know, the *Next Generation Roadmap* legislation we passed made environmental justice a top priority — defining environmental justice populations for the first time in our general laws and ensuring that State agencies are engaging with environmental justice communities in all of their decision making processes. But I know that much work remains. Investments in transportation, in particular, should prioritize low-income communities and communities of color to ensure that service is affordable and accessible for all, and that the benefits of improved public health reach environmental justice communities.

As State Auditor, I will be a passionate advocate on behalf of underserved and marginalized communities as detailed in my [Social Justice and Equity Audit Plan](#). As part of my Audit Plan, I will ensure the Mass Save program is equitable by analyzing and reporting on disparities between services provided to low-income residents and underserved communities, and residents

in more affluent communities. It is work I have already started in the Senate, where my amendment to bolster transparency, accountability and equity in the MassSave program was passed unanimously as part of 2022's *An Act Driving Climate Policy Forward*.

The Mass Save program, for instance, too often benefits wealthier communities while low-income neighborhoods are overlooked and ignored. The utility companies should be held accountable, and we must ensure equitable access to the program for underserved communities. Mass Save's stated goal is to help "residents and businesses across Massachusetts save money and energy, leading our state to a clean and energy efficient future." These are laudable goals, however, we must ensure environmental justice is not taking a backseat to the well-intentioned stated priorities of the program.

Randolph always seems to be on the losing end of every state-based formula, too, compared to other wealthier towns and larger cities. For example, we lose millions in Chapter 90 road repair funds because we cannot afford to get our streets "accepted". What can you or the Commonwealth do to help?

As the vice chair of the Joint Committee on Municipalities, I have witnessed the inequities that continue to exist between our communities regarding adequate access to state resources. It's been a non-stop battle for resources. I understand how inequitable the current formula is for communities like Randolph because I have spent my legislative career fighting to ensure that Gateway Cities – like Lawrence and Methuen, the ones I grew up in – receive their fair share. I have a strong legislative track record of fighting for these necessary funds. Our state government needs an Auditor who will prioritize equity – someone who gets it. I will continue the work I have already started by analyzing and reporting on the distribution of transportation funds in the Commonwealth.

The worst formula for Randolph is the Chapter 70 education funding formula. We have huge expenses due to our high immigrant and ESL population, which results in high local real estate taxes despite poor scores for our schools. What can you or the Commonwealth do to update the formula to get communities like ours more state funding for our schools?

I learned to speak Spanish in my twenties so that I would be able to better serve the community I currently live and work in, where we have a large Latino population. As a legislator, I served for six years on the Joint Committee on Education working to address ESL challenges. I have worked alongside the Lawrence, Haverhill and Methuen public schools for years to ensure they receive adequate resources to assist students in reaching their highest potential. I have also supported our state's adult education programs supporting ESL populations. As Auditor, I will

seek to audit and report on the implementation of the Student Opportunity Act to ensure that the vision we set forth in the legislature and passed into law is actually producing the changes our students need to close the achievement gap and create real opportunities for success. For years, we in the legislature did not have adequate reporting on the outcomes of the Education Reform Act of 1993 to help drive the conversation around the need for increased funding and overall policy updates for our most underserved communities. I will do everything in my power to shine a light on where we are continuing to fall short in closing the gap, as we know that the bill's passage was meant to be just the first step in addressing inequities. In addition to regular reporting of outcomes, we need to now follow through.

In the wake of overturning Roe, what can be done in Massachusetts to prevent further erosion of reproductive rights?

I am a passionate supporter of reproductive rights and received an [A rating](#) from Reproductive Equity Now (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice MA) for the last full session where I voted for the the ROE Act and supported replacing \$8 million in federal funding for the Title X Family Planning program after the Trump administration implemented anti-choice regulations impacting the program. I will use the appropriate powers of the Auditor's office and the bully pulpit of a woman state-wide elected official to continue my passionate support for reproductive rights. I have pledged that as Auditor I will examine whether the administration is fully complying with the ACCESS Law, and I will publicly report any failure to do so. In addition, I have also pledged to examine whether the state government fully complies with and implements laws relating to reproductive health, rights, and access to care, and will again publicly report any failure to do so.

What can be done in Massachusetts to protect same-sex marriage and other LGBT rights if the "right to privacy" is eroded?

As Republicans signal their intentions to dismantle the rights included in Obergefell, it is imperative that we use every strategy to maintain and defend marriage equality. Whether it be fighting to amend the U.S. Constitution to protect marriage equality nationally or taking steps in Massachusetts to ensure that our residents and their rights are protected, I will be there fighting alongside you. As I have proven through my 10 years of service, I will use my position as a statewide elected official to call out hate and demand the protection of these vital rights.

Included as part of my [Social Justice and Equity Audit Plan](#) is a section specific to how I as Auditor plan to address these challenges. I will examine state government contracts to ensure that diversity commitments are being met and examine our state contracts and procurement processes to ensure engagement and fair treatment for women-, veteran-, LGBTQ+, and

minority-owned businesses. As your next Auditor, I will tell you if your taxpayer money is spent equitably and hold the state government accountable to modernize its operations in the interest of justice and fairness.

I will also report on state agencies' implementation of recommendations by independent commissions dedicated to equity and justice. LGBTQ+ students are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide compared to their straight and cisgender peers. Negative treatment by others, such as bullying, is a strong and consistent risk factor for youth suicide and LGBTQ+ youth experience bullying at far greater rates than their straight and cisgender peers. A recent study revealed that between 2011–2019, an average of 20% of U.S. high school students reported in-person bullying and 15% reported electronic bullying, with no significant changes in prevalence rates over time. Massachusetts has had an independent commission focused on the needs of LGBTQ youth for decades, however the commission's recommendations have been unevenly implemented.

As Auditor, my office will examine the recommendations of the Commonwealth's independent commissions dedicated to equity and justice — including the Commission on LGBTQ Youth and LGBTQ Aging Commission.

What are your views on the Fair Share Amendment ballot initiative?

I was proud to vote to place the question on the ballot – the fourth time that I have voted in favor of the amendment. I was also thrilled to stand with Raise Up Massachusetts at a [rally](#) in my district to be the first to publicly sign the pledge for Fair Share and urge my constituents to talk to their families, friends and neighbors to get the vote out in support of the Amendment. As Auditor, I will work hard alongside you to ensure that monies raised through the Fair Share amendment are spent as they are intended: on education and transportation. There must be accountability surrounding the expenditures made through the revenue generated.

What are your views on the November ballot initiative concerning Rideshare working conditions?

I strongly oppose it. As a Senator, I have worked on legislative efforts to address these challenges alongside the AFL-CIO, whose endorsement I was honored to earn in this Auditor's race. I support Mass Not for Sale efforts, and I am proud to join my friends in organized labor – many who have endorsed me – in standing up against the Big Tech companies trying to buy the ability to hurt gig workers in Massachusetts through this ballot question. As your next State Auditor, I will fight for access to any corporate tax breaks for companies like these and reporting on predatory practices.