MA Ballot Questions

Question 1:
Authorization of State Auditor to Audit General Court Initiative

Question 1 would add a new section to state law authorizing the state auditor to audit the accounts, programs, activities, functions of all departments, offices, commissions, institutions, and activities of the state legislature and any authorities or districts created by the state legislature. The state auditor and employees of the state auditor department would also be given access to accounts, books, documents, vouchers, and other records relating to the scope of the audit. Tax returns would be excluded from state auditor access.

A "yes" vote supports explicitly authorizing the state auditor to audit the accounts, programs, activities, and functions of all departments, offices, commissions, institutions, and activities of the state legislature and any authorities or districts created by the state legislature.

A "no" vote opposes explicitly authorizing the state auditor to audit the accounts, programs, activities, and functions of all departments, offices, commissions, institutions, and activities of the state legislature and any authorities or districts created by the state legislature.

Question 2:
Repeal Competency Assessment Requirement for High School Graduation Initiative

Question 2 would repeal the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school. The initiative would require that students participate in the assessment program without achieving a certain competency level and complete all local or district graduation requirements (number of class credits, satisfactory grades, and regular attendance). If a student does not meet the minimum competency requirements when they take the MCAS in tenth grade, the proposed state law would require them to retake the assessment again in the eleventh or twelfth grade. The law would also allow any former Massachusetts high school student who was denied a diploma due to not meeting the competency requirements to request and receive a diploma if they had fulfilled all other local or district requirements. The initiative would also prohibit any sign of distinction on diplomas concerning how a student performed on the MCAS.

A "yes" vote supports repealing the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school.

A "no" vote opposes repealing the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school.

Question 3:
Unionization and Collective Bargaining for Transportation Network Drivers Initiative

Question 3 would provide transportation network drivers with the right to form unions for collective bargaining with transportation network companies, like Uber and Lyft. The transportation network companies would be authorized to form multi-company associations to represent the companies in bargaining with associations of drivers. The initiative would require the state to oversee the negotiations between the parties and approve the negotiated recommendations on wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of work.

The initiative would also create a hearing process for the Massachusetts Employment Relations Board to process unfair work practice charges against transportation network companies. The board would be authorized to award compensation to wronged parties if unfair work practices have been committed. Companies would be authorized to appeal the board's decision to the state Appeal Court.

The law would authorize a driver organization to be the exclusive bargaining representative for all drivers after it has collected signatures from at least 25% of active drivers. The initiative would define active drivers as drivers who have completed more than the median number of rides in the past six months. The board would determine if the driver organization has collected the required number of signatures. If so, the designated driver organization would have the exclusive right to represent drivers in negotiations with companies and collect voluntary membership dues. Any collective bargaining agreement would have to be approved by at least a majority of riders who have completed at least 100 trips during the previous quarter and the Secretary of Labor. The agreement would be in effect for the following three years.

A "yes" vote supports:

- providing for unionizing and collective bargaining for transportation network drivers;
- requiring the state to oversee the negotiations between the parties and approve the negotiated recommendations on wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of work; and
- requiring collective bargaining agreements to be approved by at least a majority of riders who have completed at least 100 trips during the previous quarter.

A "no" vote opposes providing for unionizing and collective bargaining for transportation network drivers.

Question 4:
Regulated Access to Psychedelic Substances Initiative

Question 4 would allow individuals aged 21 and older to cultivate, possess, and use certain natural psychedelic substances—psilocybin, psilocyn, dimethyltryptamine (DMT), mescaline, and ibogaine. These substances could be used at home or in licensed facilities under the supervision of a trained facilitator. The law would permit personal cultivation of these substances in a designated area up to 12 feet by 12 feet at home and possession of specific amounts: up to one gram each of psilocybin, psilocyn, and DMT, 18 grams of mescaline, and 30 grams of ibogaine. Individuals could also give away up to these amounts to other adults. The law would take effect on December 15, 2024.

The law would prohibit retail sales of these substances outside of licensed facilities and establish a regulatory framework, including a Natural Psychedelic Substances Commission to oversee licensing, regulation, security, and health and safety standards. A 20-member Natural Psychedelic Substances Advisory Board would provide recommendations on regulation and taxation. Sales at licensed facilities would be subject to state sales tax and an additional 15% excise tax, with local governments allowed to impose an additional tax of up to 2%. Revenues would be directed to a specific fund for the administration of the law.

The law would protect individuals using these substances as permitted from being denied medical care, public assistance, professional licensing, or facing adverse child custody decisions, unless it is proven that their use created an unreasonable danger to a minor. The law would not change existing regulations on driving under the influence or employers' rights to enforce workplace substance use policies. Property owners would have the right to prohibit the use, cultivation, or sale of these substances on their premises, and state and local governments could restrict their use in public buildings and schools.

A "yes" vote supports providing regulated access to certain psychedelic substances.

A "no" vote opposes providing regulated access to certain psychedelic substances.

Question 5:
Minimum Wage for Tipped Employees Initiative

Question 5 would gradually increase the minimum wage for tipped employees according to the following schedule:

64% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2025;
73% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2026;
82% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2027;
91% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2028; and
100% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2029.

Tipped employees would be paid the state minimum wage in addition to tips received. As of January 2024, the minimum wage for tipped employees in Massachusetts was $6.75 in addition to tips, and the minimum wage for non-tipped employees was $15.00.

A "yes" vote supports gradually increasing the wage of tipped employees until it meets the state minimum wage in 2029 and continues to permit tipping in addition to the minimum wage.

A "no" vote opposes gradually increasing the wage of tipped employees until it meets the state minimum wage in 2029.