



MassDems Listening Tour Report

March 2025

Dear Fellow Massachusetts Democrats,

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one who participated in our listening tour, whether by attending one of the nine sessions or by sharing your thoughts through written feedback. Your willingness to engage in open and honest discussions is invaluable as we navigate the challenges and uncertainties of this new administration together. Now, more than ever, it is essential that we come together as a community to voice our concerns, exchange ideas and collaborate on solutions that will shape a future that truly benefits us all. I hear you, I understand your fears and frustrations and I want you to know that you are not alone in this.

No matter how difficult the road ahead may seem, MassDems remain steadfast in our commitment to fighting for the values we share, the progress we believe in and the better future we all deserve. We refuse to back down in the face of adversity and we will continue advocating for policies that protect our communities, expand opportunities and uphold the fundamental principles of justice and equality. Together, we can push back against harmful policies and work toward meaningful, lasting change that uplifts every resident of Massachusetts.

Through this process of listening and reflecting, we have developed robust plans to support candidates who embody our values, to grow and strengthen local Democratic Committees across the Commonwealth and to win races at all levels of government. By empowering local communities and fostering grassroots organizing, we can effect meaningful change and ensure that our voices are heard. With your continued support, we will work tirelessly to elect leaders who are dedicated to advancing the rights and well-being of every individual in Massachusetts.

The path forward is one we must walk together, and I am hopeful about all that we can accomplish as we stand united in our mission.

Onward,

Steve Kerrigan
Chair, Massachusetts Democratic Party

The Listening Tour at a Glance

Listening Tour sessions were held on weeknights through January and February of 2025.

All sessions were held on Zoom to ensure individuals who would not be able to travel to in-person sessions were still able to have their voices heard. Sessions lasted 1.5-2 hours, depending on the number of attendees and individuals interested in speaking. To ensure all speakers had equal time, each speaker was given two minutes to speak and could track their time through Zoom's timer function.

Sessions were tailored to residents of specific Congressional Districts and they were given priority speaking slots. Non-residents were only permitted to speak at other districts' sessions if they were unable to attend their own.

At each session, Chair Kerrigan and Executive Director Roof gave a brief presentation of trends in voter data for the respective Congressional District. The slides used to present each district's data can be accessed [at this link](#). In order to hear from as many people as possible, the Listening Tour functioned as an open forum rather than a Q&A session with Chair Kerrigan and Executive Director Roof.

Timeline

- November 14th: Chair Kerrigan announces Listening Tour at a meeting of the Democratic State Committee
- January 7th: First listening session held for residents of Congressional District 1
 - o **90 attendees**
- January 8th: Congressional District 2 listening session held
 - o Rescheduled from 1/9 to avoid conflicting with the National Day of Mourning for President Carter
 - o **100 attendees**
- January 13th: Congressional District 3 listening session held
 - o **81 attendees**

- January 21st: Congressional District 5 listening session held
 - o **139 attendees**
- January 23rd: Congressional District 6 listening session held
 - o **139 attendees**
- January 27th: Congressional District 4 listening session held
 - o Rescheduled from 1/16 to avoid conflicting with Governor Healey's State of the Commonwealth Address
 - o **127 attendees**
- January 28th: Congressional District 7 listening session held
 - o **106 attendees**
- February 10th: Congressional District 8 listening session held
 - o **152 attendees**
- February 13th: Final listening session held for residents of Congressional District 9
 - o **192 attendees**

In total, **1,126** people attended our live Listening Tour sessions, and another **387** submitted written feedback which was open to submissions for the entire Listening Tour period.

What We Heard From You

Those who shared their thoughts with us on one of our listening sessions or through written feedback all expressed their own unique perspective and ideas. Although we're grateful for the diverse perspectives shared by over **1,500** people during the Listening Tour, we acknowledge that they represent a very small percentage of Massachusetts voters and that the opinions collected here are not necessarily reflective of the opinions of MassDems at-large or of marginalized communities including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ folks. In listening to and reading the perspectives from participants across Massachusetts, there were some common themes in their identified areas for change, which form the basis of this report:

- Involvement and collaboration with local Democratic groups, especially in Central and Western Massachusetts and Bristol and Plymouth counties.

- Participants were concerned about the increasing influence of Republicans in the state's rural areas and asked that MassDems focus more energy on uplifting candidates and committees in those areas.
- Participants hoped that this increased energy would include the hosting of more MassDems events outside of Boston and in Central/Western Massachusetts.
- Participants think the party should take an active role in aiding communities without DTCs to form one. (In this report, "DTC" or "local committee" refers to Democratic Town, City and Committees alike.)
- Concern over Democratic politicians' stances on the war in Gaza.
 - Participants worried that Democratic politicians' conflicting views on the war in Gaza may have contributed to the outcome of the 2024 election and may be alienating either Arab-American or Jewish voters.
- Attendees expressed their support for transparency at all levels of government.
- Improvement in messaging and focus on policies that are popular with the base.
 - Participants told us they wanted the party's messaging to reflect issues from across the state and to be specifically tailored to the working-class people who make up the majority of our state and our party.
 - Great focus was put on featuring economic themes in MassDems messaging.
 - Some participants urged caution with regard to messaging to conservative voters, and hoped to avoid negativity to hopefully draw these voters to vote Democrat; others wanted the party to hit back hard on harmful Republican policies.
- Protecting marginalized groups
 - Participants expressed concern for the rights of many marginalized groups, including immigrants, LGBTQIA+ folks, BIPOC and women, and urged the party to stand up for those groups whenever possible.

- Support for Democratic candidates
 - Participants urged support for Democratic candidates across the Commonwealth, including in traditionally red or purple areas.
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Moving Forward

As we move through 2025 and beyond, the Massachusetts Democratic Party remains committed to strengthening our grassroots efforts, expanding access to critical resources and building a more connected and effective movement.

We are prioritizing clearer communication, increased training opportunities and better support for local leaders to help them organize and engage their communities more effectively. By providing enhanced tools, data and strategic guidance, we aim to empower volunteers and advocates at every level. Additionally, we are deepening our commitment to year-round organizing and investing in efforts that will strengthen both local and national campaigns. Beyond our state, we recognize the importance of broader electoral battles and will actively support key races in alignment with our shared values.

Most importantly, we will continue to listen to our members, recognizing that there is strength in a diversity of perspectives and that we are united by far more than what divides us. Together, these initiatives reflect our dedication to a more inclusive, engaged and impactful Democratic movement.

Investing in the Commonwealth

- Clearer Communication: Regular DTC-specific emails to provide guidance on caucus planning, member recruitment and ways to engage with the state party.
- More Access & Tools: Free Votebuilder for all committees (with two users per DTC), free access to Mobilize and expanded permissions to help organize more effectively.
- Regular Support & Training: Monthly DTC Chairs' meetings and ongoing training sessions on key tools like Votebuilder, ActBlue and Mobilize.
- Better Data: Monthly lists of newly registered Democrats, access to volunteer lists and toolkits for outreach through calls, texts and doors.

- Impacting Elections: We are also committed to standing up a coordinated effort to support local races and mobilize volunteers for key national races.
- Year-Round Organizing Support: MassDems will be hiring an Organizing Coordinator to help with strengthening the DTCs as well as with local and national campaign capacity building. We will also have two internship cohorts in 2025 that will support a wide range of MassDems projects, including supporting local groups and candidates.

Exporting Activism Across America

As is tradition at MassDems, we will continue to be a national leader when it comes to exporting our volunteers to assist with direct voter contact work in the most important elections in 2025.

Special Elections

- FL-01 - Gay Valimont (D candidate)
- FL-06 - Josh Weil (D candidate)
- NY-21 - Blake Gendebien (D candidate)

These are the congressional special election races, at the moment. This could change.

MassDems and MA party activists have already started making weekly calls into the FL races with NY work to follow. These races could flip control of Congress if the Dems flip all the seats.

Wisconsin State Supreme Court Race

- Susan Crawford (D candidate)

MassDems runs a bi-weekly phone bank into Wisconsin. This race is already shaping up as one of the most costly and contentious campaigns in 2025.

During the 2023 state supreme court race, MA was the 3rd highest non-Wisconsin state in volunteering, just behind IL and CA.

Gubernatorial Elections

- Virginia
- New Jersey

These two gubernatorial races are always somewhat of a reaction to a newly elected president and with two wins, the party can have some momentum heading into the midterms.

Conclusion

The voices and perspectives shared throughout this Listening Tour have been invaluable in shaping our path forward. Your input has reinforced the importance of strengthening our grassroots organizing, fostering greater transparency and ensuring that every Democrat in Massachusetts feels heard and empowered. While challenges remain, your engagement has made it clear that there is a shared commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive and more effective Democratic movement. Through clearer communication, better access to organizing tools and a focus on supporting candidates at every level, we are taking concrete steps to address the concerns raised and to create lasting, positive change in our communities.

As we implement these initiatives, we remain dedicated to keeping this conversation going. The work of building a better future does not stop with this report—it continues through ongoing collaboration, listening and action. Our strength as a party comes from our unity, our shared values and our unwavering belief in the power of collective effort. Together, we will continue to fight for a more just, equitable and representative democracy, here in Massachusetts and around the country. We are grateful for your participation, your passion and your commitment. We look forward to working alongside you in the months and years to come.

The Listening Tour, this report and the important work forthcoming would not have been possible without the efforts of the MassDems staff and our prolific notetaker, DSC Member Martina Jackson, and we thank them.

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