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**From:** [maeghan silverberg](#)

**To:** [Bill Densmore](#)

**Cc:** [Emily LaGrassa-Campaign](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2009 1:23 PM

**Subject:** Questions to Martha Coakley

Hi Mr. Densmore:

Thank you for your patience with us, and I'm sorry we couldn't connect you directly with Martha on our 12/08 countdown tour.

Attached please find Martha's responses to the questions submitted at the Cup & Saucer.

Thank you very much,

Maeghan

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Maeghan Beth Silverberg

[www.marthacoakley.com](http://www.marthacoakley.com)

[www.facebook.com/marthacoakley](http://www.facebook.com/marthacoakley)

[www.twitter.com/marthacoakley](http://www.twitter.com/marthacoakley)

QUESTIONS FOR MARTHA COAKLEY  
HAND-DELIVERED MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2009  
TO MS. COAKLEY AT THE CUP & SAUCER CAFÉ  
NORTH ADAMS, MASS.

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*Dear Ms. Coakley:*

*I was invited by a friend to a meeting with U.S. Senate candidate Martha Coakley in North Adams on Monday, Nov. 22. To inform myself on the issues, I read candidate weblogs, and sent this query by email to about 70 friends around the state: "I've been invited to an appearance by Martha Coakley in North Adams tomorrow -- her home town. Assume I get a chance to ask her some questions, what would you have me ask? I'd like ideas for questions about issues, not politics, substance not the horse race. Since #hcr and her abortion stance are well covered, I'm looking for other issues." Some 16 people responded with questions. I also solicited questions at our daughter's end-of-soccer-season family banquet. Here are the questions which resulted. I will post all these questions on the blog site: <http://www.greyllocknews.com> and will post your answers, when they are received. I hope you appreciate this effort to supply you with a cross-section of what's on the minds of your prospective constituents.*

*William P. "Bill" Densmore (Jr.)  
1182 Main Street  
Williamstown MA 01267  
413-458-8001 / <http://newshare.typepad.com/about.html>*

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1. **WHAT IS YOUR DEBATE STRATEGY?** -- Hyde Park resident Michael Ball of the political blog [www.massmarrier.blogspot.com](http://www.massmarrier.blogspot.com) says you have failed to respond to requests for interviews and participation in podcasts with progressive bloggers. On Saturday, you reportedly accepted and then at the last minute withdrew from a four-way debate in Lincoln, Mass. Said Michael Capuano in Lincoln: "Someone who wants to be a United States senator is repeatedly unwilling to put themselves out in front to answer tough questions, to have a debate with their colleagues, how can they possibly think they are going to be a successful United States senator?" On the other hand, one of your supports wrote that as a woman you come across as cautious and measured, and as a woman are labeled as boring and uncharismatic, where as if you were more fiery, like two of your opponents, you would be labled as high-strung and unstable. All that aside, if not in debate, what is your plan for being routinely accountable to voters now and if elected? Will you pledge to make yourself available for at least two more televised debates before the Dec. 8 primary? If not, why not? Why do you think some campaign observers have formed the impression that your are ducking debates? Do you ever think a public servant would be justified in avoiding a

neutral venue to be accountable with other candidates? If so, when, and do you see yourself in that position now? -- from Bill Densmore, Williamstown, Mass., 413-458-8001, [bdensmore@newshare.com](mailto:bdensmore@newshare.com)

**In this unique short campaign timeline, it is even more important that we engage voters in as many different settings as possible. That is why we work so hard to have a transparent campaign – through our website, social media channels like Facebook and Twitter, and by engaging at many candidate forums and debates. This week alone, I will participate in three major debates and a candidates’ forum. Including those, I will have participated in twelve debates and/or candidate forums. I would love to attend every debate or forum to which I’m invited, but my schedule does not always allow given the myriad of commitments that a candidate has. I make my best effort to be part of events all across the Commonwealth and connect with voters from all parts of Massachusetts.**

2. **STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT** – While some economic numbers are looking better, the nation has millions of people unemployed, and millions more under-employed, including hundreds of dollars who are unemployed and beyond expiration of unemployment benefits. Do you think it is the role of government or private enterprise to give able workers a job? And if it is private enterprise, what will you to provide the certainty in costs of health care, social security and other taxes that will help make businesses confident to hire?

**It is through partnerships between government and private enterprise that we will be able to create quality jobs for able workers. Government should work with private enterprise to help foster innovation and creativity in the marketplace. We also need to ensure that private enterprises play by the rules and do not put the economy in jeopardy through irresponsible and deceptive business practices. Government should create an environment, through regulation, tax policy, and research incentives where private companies can thrive.**

3. **FEDERAL SHIELD LAW** – Holding government accountable requires that whistleblowers may take their case to the public and media without fear of being identified except when there is an extreme, countervailing public purpose (such as national security). In June of 2008 you were one of only nine state attorneys general NOT to sign a bipartisan letter urging U.S. senators to pass a federal shield law. The bill was signed by 41 attorneys general, including those of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut. As you know, federal shield legislation has been passed by the House and is currently awaiting a vote from the Senate Judiciary Committee. Why did you not join the other AGS supporting the federal shield bill; what is your position on the current bill; and will you vote for it if you are elected to the Senate and are called upon to vote on it? – from Robert Bertsche, Boston, Mass. (counsel to New England Newspaper & Press Assn.)

**I support the recognition of a shield rule to protect bona fide journalists from having to disclose the identity of confidential sources. Based on my background and experience, I am also committed to ensuring public safety, prosecuting crime, and preventing terrorist attacks. In the Senate, I will support a reporter shield law that is carefully defined and drafted to ensure that it serves its intended, legitimate purpose.**

4. **YOUR USE OF STATE CAMPAIGN FUNDS** -- On Nov. 17, NECN ran a clip showing you being asked by a reporter: "Can you explain why as a senate candidate you are not speaking to your campaign records?" You replied: "No, thank you." The reporter asked: "Why can't you explain that." You replied: "I'm not going to talk to you about it." Given that, according to the NECN report, the FEC is investigating a charge by the state Republican Party that you might have illegally spent money for the Senate race from your state campaign coffers, could you please explain what it is that this is a subject you're not going to talk about? In Oct. 5 interview with Channel 5, you said you "were not going to say" that you weren't running for the Senate in June. Surely this is a hyper-technical issue and we can assume not intentional problems, but assuming that to be the case, why not say so? --- From Bill Densmore, Williamstown, Mass., 413-458-8001  
[bdensmore@newshare.com](mailto:bdensmore@newshare.com)

**Throughout the campaign, I have practiced openness and transparency regarding my campaign funding. When approached at the State House and questioned about my finances, I was there on official business as Attorney General, and therefore did not feel that it was an appropriate time or venue to answer such questions. My decision to run for this vacant Senate seat was made in early September, when I made my announcement.**

5. **FUNDING EDUCATION/LIBRARIES** -- Since 2002, Massachusetts schools have been progressively starved of funds by a series of state aid cuts and town-budget reductions. In Amherst, for example, the cumulative cut since 2002 is close to \$20 million, on an inflation-adjusted basis. Property taxes are a terrible way to fund schools. How about fact that regional Bookmobiles in Western Mass. are being cancelled and small communities have no library funding? What is the answer for the nation's schools and libraries and what role should the federal government play? In a more general sense: What will you do as a senator to support the Massachusetts economy, especially in Western Massachusetts, where high-tech and health-tech have largely not replaced manufacturing decline? Or, in other words, why did you and your siblings leave North Adams and does that matter? -- From Richard Hood, Amherst, Mass. -- [rick@flowmediadesign.com](mailto:rick@flowmediadesign.com) / and Art Clifford, Amherst, Mass. / [Clifford@journ.umass.edu](mailto:Clifford@journ.umass.edu) / and Bill Densmore (last part).

**As Senator, I will support measures to equalize education funding that also protect**

**our cherished local control in public education. I also will support increasing federal funding for education, which currently makes up only 15% of total school funding on a national level.**

**In order to support the Massachusetts economy, we should train our youth and workers with a new set of skills and proficiencies to prepare them for jobs in growth industries. As Senator, I will focus on improving the ability of Massachusetts residents to meet the needs of the 21st century economy by increasing resources for CAREER and Technical Education programs, supporting the workforce investment board system, aligning secondary and postsecondary efforts to train workers, and improving employer confidence in our ability to train a skilled workforce.**

6. **FARM / SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES** – The average American farmer is now about 59 years old. As farms grow more corporate, and larger, most food is grown far from markets and cities. This makes our food system vulnerable to increased transportation costs and rolling crop failures. What will you do in the U.S. senate to create incentives for smaller, “locally-grown” initiatives that have the potential to create more sustainable communities?

**Increasing access to organic and local foods not only benefits small farmers nationwide, but also enhances our physical health and reduces environmental pollution from excess packaging and transportation. To address this issue, I support the Farm Bill that was enacted in 2007, as well as increased efforts to provide adequate nutritional information and to make local produce more broadly available.**

7. **WHICH COMMITTEE?** – What committee(s) of the Senate will you ask to join if elected and why?

**If given a choice, I would select the Senate’s HELP (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) and Judiciary Committees. An appointment to the HELP Committee would enable me to assist with the passage and, especially, the implementation of health care reform. The Judiciary Committee would be a natural extension of my skills and experience in the public sector, as a prosecutor, the Middlesex District Attorney and Attorney General.**

8. **WHAT WILL YOU ACCOMPLISH?** – Imagine you are elected and you are at the end of your first term in the senate. By what criteria would you expect voters to judge your performance? What specific, tangible things do you hope to achieve? How will Massachusetts, America and the world be different, and better, because of your service in Washington?

**I will be a different kind of leader in the Senate, someone who will stand up for**

**what's right and what's important. I will fight to expand coverage, improve quality and reduce the costs of health care, and will tackle the economic crisis head on and take all necessary steps to get people back to work. I will work to ensure that we have the proper financial regulations in place to prevent another economic collapse, and support more funding for education. I will also protect our civil rights and liberties, while providing law enforcement with the necessary tools to protect American citizens here and abroad.**

9. **IMMIGRATION POLICY** – The Great Barrington Courier reports this week that a few weeks ago, a 20-year resident of Great Barrington, a respected business person, was taken from his home at 11 p.m. by immigration authorities, imprisoned and deported to Mexico because he was undocumented. What reports to you support in current immigration policy? Would you support any form of amnesty for the 22 million undocumented workers currently in the United States, whereby they can continue living here while earning citizenship? Should they be eligible for government health-insurance benefits? -- from David Scribner, Pittsfield, Mass. and Martha Byington, Boston, Mass.

**As Attorney General, I had a strong record of enforcing wage and hour laws that protect all workers, regardless of immigration status, as well as ensuring that domestic violence and other abuse cases were handled equally for all Commonwealth residents. As Senator, I will continue this commitment to fairness and equality, supporting fair treatment of undocumented workers and a responsible pathway to citizenship that rewards those individuals who have been living in this country, abiding by the law, working hard and paying their taxes.**

10. **CIVIL LIBERTIES** – President Obama has been clear that he would prefer to look forward than to rehash legally the alleged civil-liberties transgressions of the Bush administration. As a prosecutor, have you ever thought there was a time when credible allegations of violations of civil rights and First Amendment freedoms should be overlooked? How would you react, as a U.S. senator? Should constitutional freedoms be preserved, even in time of crisis? -- From David Scribner, Pittsfield, Mass. – [dscrib@verizon.net](mailto:dscrib@verizon.net)

**I believe that civil rights and civil liberties are central to a healthy democracy, and I believe that any proposed legislation must strike an appropriate balance between protecting our national security and safeguarding the fundamental First Amendment freedoms and privacy rights that define our nation. Specifically, I do not support the PATRIOT Act in its current form and would not vote to reauthorize this legislation as it stands.**

11. **COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID** – As attorney general, what have you done about enforcing financial-aid fair-disclosure regulations on private colleges? What about

online colleges? Why does it appear prosecutions in other states are way ahead of Massachusetts? -- from Joe Beckmann, Somerville, Mass., 617-625-9369, [joe.beckmann@gmail.com](mailto:joe.beckmann@gmail.com)

**As Attorney General, I have investigated and prosecuting evidence of unfair student lending practices, including collusion, between institutions of higher education and the student loan industry. That includes initiating a prosecution of Emerson College that led to a settlement of more than \$775,000 earlier this year, which returned funds directly to student victims.**

12. **INTERNET CENSORSHIP** – Many schools and libraries in Massachusetts apply “filters” to their Internet connections. Lost in the filters is access to many legitimate web services increasingly vital to political discourse, including YouTube and Facebook. As a senator, would you act to get government out of the business of censorship, or at least out of the business of such broad-stroke censorship? Does government have a role to play in shielding minors from every corner of the web, or is that up to parents? -- from Bill Densmore, Williamstown, Mass., 413-458-8001, [bdensmore@newshare.com](mailto:bdensmore@newshare.com).

**I understand the challenges our society faces in balancing the need to protect privacy and individual freedom while also giving the government and law enforcement the tools necessary to keep our nation safe as well as protect our most vulnerable citizens, namely children and the elderly, from online predators and scam artists. I believe government does have a role in protecting our children from dangerous online predators, but we must be mindful of constitutional concerns.**

13. **INFORMATION DEMOCRACY** – In October, the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy released a 100-page report which, among other things, recommended a national commitment to network neutrality, high standards for universal broadband access, digital and media literacy education as critical components of classroom curricula, curricula, and increased support for public media that meets community needs. Are you familiar with the report, and what do you think the Senate can do about those priorities? -- from Bill Densmore, Williamstown, Mass., 413-458-8001 / [bdensmore@newshare.com](mailto:bdensmore@newshare.com) / (<http://www.knightcomm.org/>)

**I am a proponent of net neutrality and believe in an internet system that allows consumers, rather than ISP providers, to control the marketplace. The principles of net neutrality must cover all paths to the Internet. We need to protect the openness of the Internet whether it is being accessed from a wire line connection at a home computer, a wireless network at an office, or a Blackberry while walking outside. As technology expands and more people are accessing the Internet while on the move, it is important to protect the qualities of the Internet that have made it such a powerful tool.**

14. **WORLD COMPETITION** -- What does America need to do to ready ourselves for increasing economic competition from China, India and Brazil; what, specifically, is the responsibility of the senator from Massachusetts, and what, specifically is beyond the scope of those senatorial responsibilities. Give examples of each. – From Samantha Clemens, Somerville, Mass., 617-642-0088 / [sam@causeandeffectworld.com](mailto:sam@causeandeffectworld.com) / [www.samanthaclemens.com](http://www.samanthaclemens.com)

**As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is essential that we both build on our existing strengths and adapt our economy to the many challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, such as the emerging green economy. As Senator, my primary responsibility will be to ensure that Massachusetts can fully capitalize on these opportunities, notably by securing the Commonwealth federal funding that fosters green technologies, life sciences research and advanced technology manufacturing centers. I will also work with other Senators, Congressmen and the White House to develop national solutions that reduce our trade imbalance, provide incentives to business to pursue new energy technologies and provide affordable health coverage that will keep our workforce healthy and our industries globally competitive.**

15. **PERSONAL WEALTH** – Based on your own statements, as reported by questioner Martha Byington, of Boston, you have pegged your personal family wealth at somewhere between \$1,000 and \$250,000 – not including the substantial sums you have raised for political campaigns. Is that your total personal wealth? If so, that would make you one of the most middle-class of U.S. senators. Asked one questioner: “How can we expect her to represent us when she can’t even manage her own finances and put money in the bank?” What do you see as the pros and cons of going to Washington as an inexperienced (in Washington) person of modest means as compared with at least two of your opponents. Does that make you vulnerable to special interests, or immune to them? -- Inspired by questions from Martha Byington, Boston, Mass., [mebyington@comcast.net](mailto:mebyington@comcast.net) and Steve Garfield, of Boston, Mass. <http://www.stevegarfield.com>

**I have provided the Federal Election Commission with all the necessary financial paperwork needed as a candidate for the United States Senate. I have been a long-term public servant and have substantial equity in my home. My husband and I are financially secure.**

16. **PRISON REFORM** --- As a prosecutor, you are familiar with prisons, the fact that three out of 10 American black males has been in prison, that the incarceration rate per capital in America is among the highest in the world. Most people are in prisons for drug offenses. The trends are not good and warehousing people in prisons is an increasingly expensive proposition for society. What will

you do in the senate to spotlight America's prison-industrial complex and figure out how to shrink it, perhaps by treating drug use as a medical not criminal problem, and youth offenders as candidates for reform not recidivism?

**I believe we need to provide more resources for reentry programs that give prisoners the skills they need to succeed when they are released from prison. In many cases, these individuals have not had any access to basic job training. Providing prisoners with tools they can use after release for finding and retaining work, along with reentry counseling, could go a long way in smoothing the transition back into society.**

17. **HEALTH-CARE REFORM** – A couple of people support in principal your stand in favor of covering the costs of abortion in any federal health-care reform legislation. But they ask if you would vote against an otherwise acceptable bill solely because it contained abortion-funding restrictions? Their view is that to do so might be reflective of an ability to see the need for compromise and consensus in a legislative situation. One person asked detailed questions about coverage, appended at the bottom.

**Achieving health care reform is a priority, and I if I am elected to the Senate, I will proudly cast my vote for meaningful health care reform legislation. We can achieve reform without having to sacrifice Constitutionally-guaranteed rights.**

18. **CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS/FINANCE/SPEECH** -- You have occasionally been criticized as being soft on political corruption, preferring to let the U.S. attorney's office investigate allegations rather than get involved yourself. Would you care to defend your record? And can you identify one concrete step you would support to ensure the integrity of members of Congress? For example, how would you strike the balance between curbing the influence of campaign contributions on Washington and the right of citizens to "speak politically" through their pocketbook support of public officials? A related question: Why should a legal corporation have First Amendment rights? Do you think the Founding Fathers intended that? Would you support overturning legal precedent on that point? -- Bill Densmore, with help from Dan Kennedy, Northeastern University / [da.kennedy@neu.edu](mailto:da.kennedy@neu.edu) / [www.dankennedy.net](http://www.dankennedy.net)

**I am proud of my track record as Attorney General of Massachusetts in fighting corruption. In addition to cases our office handled directly, I have worked closely with federal officials to ensure swift and effective prosecution of a number of corrupt public officials, resulting in a cleaner Commonwealth. In the Senate, I will support ethics reform measures that ensure the full disclosure of gifts and donors.**



**As Senator, I will work hard to ensure that all people, including those with disabilities, are given equal access to affordable health care. I know health care reform will not end at enactment. It will be a process, and will require significant attention to ensure the rights of Americans are protected as we implement these reforms.**