



Appendix to LWV- Marblehead Student Advocacy Guide Sample Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds

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Letters in Response to an Article

SATs and Measuring Merit in College Admissions

Readers discuss a column by Ross Douthat about colleges no longer requiring SAT scores.
New York Times, May 13, 2023

To the Editor: Re “[Can College Meritocracy Survive?](#),” by Ross Douthat (column, April 30):

Good riddance to the SAT. It is a simplistic yardstick of performance — and tests a certain type of intelligence, whereas there are many. Further, it exacerbates the unfairness of higher education in the United States.

Those with means avail themselves of small armies of tutors and expensive prep courses, while those born into modest circumstances are on their own — a microcosm of American society.

Though even as the SAT fades in importance, we must recognize that its diminishment alone does not render the college admissions process fair — in fact, it is obscene in its bias. If we want a truly meritocratic system, we would do away with preferential admission for legacy applicants and those with parents who are generous donors.

I went to a private school in Manhattan. By and large, those whose parents had legacy status, connections and/or gave large donations received acceptance letters from Ivy League schools. Those who lacked these resources — acquired by birth and not merit — were left to pick up the scraps thrown from the table. Meritocracy is merely a myth.

Daniel Dolgicer
New York

To the Editor:

Ross Douthat’s concept of meritocracy misses the forest for the trees. The number of spots at Ivy League-type schools is artificially limited; there will always be meritorious students outside the elite bubble. Merit is determined by putting your education to good use after finishing college, not by the arbitrary number your school was assigned by some rankings conglomerate.

I attended a respectable but not “elite” school in Ohio for my bachelor’s degree. I still got an amazing education and was surrounded by incredible classmates. My experience in industry and graduate school is that people from nonelite schools frequently compete with or outperform peers from pedigreed schools. Rankings simply cannot accurately describe the quality and applicability of the instruction students receive in college.

So let’s agree as a society to drop the obsession with college rankings and admission to brand-name schools. Instead, we should focus our collective attention on increasing funding for universities across the board. Invest in *everyone’s* education. This is the path to a true meritocracy.

Quinn Winters
Munich

The writer is a graduate student at Technical University of Munich.

To the Editor:

While fretting over the demise of standardized tests in college admissions, Ross Douthat overlooks the real reason that admissions professionals have soured on their use: [Standardized tests are poor predictors](#) of actual performance in college.

Admissions work is more nuanced in the 21st century because professionals have read the data showing that unquantifiable factors like “grit” and “resilience” are better predictors of success in college than an ACT score. They know not to discount a student from an underfunded high school with poor test scores but lots of “A” grades. That student has shown the desire and discipline for academic work.

If you want a meritocracy, then the tests no longer fit the admissions task (and probably never did). Let 'em go the way of blue books.

Jim Brown
Victoria Brown
Havertown, Pa.

The writers are retired college professors.

To the Editor:

I could not agree more with Ross Douthat’s analysis.

I came from an immigrant working-class Italian family, so no exposure to the kinds of books, discussions, etc. of my upper-class competitors. I was class valedictorian at a public high school in a suburban Boston town that was very working class.

Had I not done well on the SATs, I doubt that I would have gotten accepted to Barnard, Jackson (Tufts), Wellesley or Brandeis.

I think Mr. Douthat is exactly right that it’s not the SATs that work against applicants who come from the middle or lower classes but the extracurriculars, the essays, the “right demeanor” in the interview. (I was wholly surprised by being asked in two of my interviews about whether I would be traveling in Europe during my summer before freshman year. How about a *job*?)

In the end, I became a highly successful partner for almost 20 years in a large Washington, D.C., law firm.

Marilyn Doria
Madison, Conn.

To the Editor:

Michael Sandel’s book “The Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good” explains that meritocracy is not as worth preserving as Ross Douthat claims.

As a secondary school English teacher and school administrator for over 25 years, I “get” why standardized testing often misrepresents a student’s true ability and potential.

Many talented students, both from affluent and poor backgrounds, do poorly on time-stressed standardized tests — though those from affluent families have the financial means to hire tutors to help them practice and improve.

Many American teens can’t or don’t go on to higher education, and feel unprepared to pursue college or a career (as high as [75 percent according to one survey](#)). And of the roughly [60 percent who do go to college](#), only about [60 percent graduate in six years](#).

The focus shouldn’t be on elite universities and the merit of college admissions, but on why so many American teens don’t or can’t go on to higher education, or can’t complete a degree. Part of this problem is our culture’s focus on a college degree as necessary for a middle-class life.

Meritocracy and SATs aren’t the issue. Why our high schools so poorly prepare teens for productive lives is what we should be worrying about as a nation.

James Berkman
Plymouth, Vt.

To the Editor:

College admissions exemplifies how meritocracy has become gamified. This is why I stopped working for a company that prepares middle and high school students for admission to a top college.

Such businesses hire consultants — often college students like me — to construct an extracurricular plan for students or patch up their academic weaknesses. The result is a system in which privileged people help privileged people, where schools admit applications that are better than their applicants.

Admissions committees must more seriously consider whether the applicant and application are indeed of the same quality. They should begin to require students to declare whether they received outside help with their application, and how much. Then admissions officers can adjust the standards for these students accordingly.

Aman Majmudar
Chicago
The writer is a junior at the University of Chicago.

To the Editor:

A question that’s left out of Ross Douthat’s column on meritocracy is whether or not we should value Ivy League degrees more than others. Are Ivy grads valued because they have more skills, or because when they were 18 they were able to get into a fancy school?

The lazy old-boys network that continues to recruit from a narrow pool for important jobs in a variety of fields is more to blame than the college admissions process.

Dave Case
Hood River, Ore.

The writer is a high school teacher who writes many letters of recommendations for his students.

Workplace is the next battleground in affirmative action fight

Boston Globe. August 26, 2023

Ayana Parsons, a partner at the Fearless Fund, spoke during a news conference on Aug. 10 in New York. Attorneys for the Atlanta-based venture capital firm being sued over a grant program investing in Black women have vowed to fight back against the lawsuit, calling it misguided and frivolous.

Ayana Parsons, a partner at the Fearless Fund, spoke during a news conference on Aug. 10 in New York. Attorneys for the Atlanta-based venture capital firm being sued over a grant program investing in Black women have vowed to fight back against the lawsuit, calling it misguided and frivolous.

We have a moral obligation to right the wrongs of the past

It is shocking but not surprising that the activist behind the case that brought about the Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action in college admissions has turned his sights toward workplaces — and is behind litigation against a grant program for Black women entrepreneurs in Georgia (“Next affirmative action target: workplace,” Page A1, Aug. 21). Edward Blum’s legal track record comprises mostly cases that are, at their core, anti-Black since, in essence, they seek to prevent Black people and families from overcoming blatant forms of institutional racism. Blum’s latest attack, on the Atlanta-based Fearless Fund, a grant program founded by and created to nurture financially aspirational Black women, is yet another whitewashing of the meaning of “freedom” and “equity” from a reverse racism angle.

In reality, freedom means having equitable access to this country’s economy and rights. By our very humanness, several generations of Black people have not been afforded this access. We have a moral obligation to right these wrongs by every lever possible, whether that’s through policies such as paid leave for all or through philanthropic ventures to level the field, such as the Fearless Fund. Blum’s claim that the Fearless Fund’s Black women-only eligibility requirement is racially biased characterizes racism as a social construct instead of a systemic issue — a tactic that itself is inherently racist.

Affirmative action was a step toward both correcting past laws that intentionally excluded entire groups of qualified people and distinguishing between structural racism and social prejudice. It is imperative that those of us who actually believe in freedom stand up against systemic biases, people, and actions that continue to deprive Black lives.

Josephine Kalipeni
Executive director
Families Values @ Work
Berwyn Heights, Md.

Mountain of data urging action on health equity in Massachusetts

Boston Globe August 25, 2023

It is tempting to believe that problems of racism and inequity in health care are most acute outside of Massachusetts. But data tell a different story, as detailed in a recent report issued by the Center for Health Information and Analysis (“[Some are admitted to hospitals more often: Data find inequities among Black and Hispanic patients.](#)” Metro, Aug. 23). Such findings help explain the inequities we see in

health outcomes. A recent report from the Boston Public Health Commission comparing [Roxbury and Back Bay found a 23-year difference in life expectancy](#), and another from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation found that the [economic burden of health inequities](#) experienced by Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian populations in Massachusetts totaled an astonishing \$5.9 billion each year.

Sustainable, comprehensive solutions to structural racism require change in our policies and systems. Toward this end, the Health Equity Compact, a group of health and public health leaders of color, has put forward [An Act to Advance Health Equity](#). This bill builds on Massachusetts' historic leadership in health care reform, as the first state to pass [universal insurance coverage](#) (2006) followed by [payment reform](#) to help keep costs in check (2012). Time for the third leg of the stool: addressing the inequity and racism that is baked into the system.

The Massachusetts Public Health Association is proud to work alongside a broad coalition in support of this legislation that brings the promise of equitable change in the health care system within reach.

Carlene Pavlos
Executive director
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Boston

The stakes of Cape watershed cleanup extend deep into the ocean

Boston Globe, August 23, 2023

On Cape Cod, poorly maintained and aging septic systems are a primary cause of the nitrogen pollution that plagues coastal ecosystems. In May 2022, the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition installed a KleanTu septic system in the Sandy Shores neighborhood around Shubael Pond. Barnstable is in the first phase of a \$1.4 billion project to bring sewer service to property owners. Jonathan Wiggs/Globe Staff

Re [“Spending millions to restore Cape waters”](#) (Page A1, Aug. 19): Beth Treffeisen’s article describing pollution from septic tanks on Cape Cod is particularly disturbing in light of other [recent reports](#) about the declining lobster catch in Cape Cod Bay. Septic runoff can fuel algal blooms. Decaying algae removes oxygen from seawater, resulting in hypoxic areas where lobsters cannot survive. The other significant contributing factors in the lobster decline are shifting winds, which affect currents, and [higher water temperatures](#), largely due to climate change.

The lobster population collapse in Southern New England parallels the coral reef die-off in Florida, where algal blooms fed by runoff dealt an initial blow to the reefs and a climate-induced [marine heat wave](#) landed the knockout punch.

The lesson in both cases is that ecosystems undermined by pollutants are more vulnerable to climate change. An often-overlooked policy for climate resilience is ensuring that ecosystems remain healthy so that their natural defenses are not compromised. Investments in stemming the waste water crisis on Cape Cod will be critical as the effects of climate change continue to manifest.

Frederick Hewett
Cambridge

Letter Advocating for a Specific Bill

The case for Common Start legislation

Lowell Sun May 20, 2023

Massachusetts faces a workforce crisis, with a shrinking number of 20- to 40-year-old workers. A major contributor to this workforce deficit is the fact that the cost of childcare in Massachusetts is so high, with the average cost ranging from \$15,095 a year for toddlers to \$21,000 a year for infants, according to the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation.

For one of us, a parent of a 2-year old, the greatest stressor as a parent has revolved around childcare. The lack of options and costly price tag forced my spouse and I to pull out our 2-year-old after only 3 months. The only available slot after many searches was 2 days a week, which prevented me from increasing my work hours as an R.N. back to full time. Both my spouse and I have stable careers, but that doesn't seem to matter when it comes to finding affordable childcare.

Thankfully, local legislators including state Sen. John Cronin and state Rep. Kushmerek have signed on to sponsor legislation known as 'Common Start' which promises relief from this financial burden for young families, so they can return to work and increase their income.

These bills would provide financial assistance to families to significantly lower the cost of care and enhance earning opportunities. They would allow young children to participate in high quality early education and care programs with greater access to wrap-around care, promising increased educational attainment and lifetime earnings.

Passing the Common Start bills is an essential step to address our workforce crisis.

Cecile Tousignant, M.S. (Advocate/early education and care)

Lauren Sweeney, R.N.

Tyrie Osbry

Another case of domestic violence. Lawmakers must bolster protections.

Boston Globe, July 21, 2023

A prosecutor said in court Monday that Richard Hanson, 64, fatally bludgeoned his wife, Nancy Hanson, 54, at the family's home on Brookline Street in Newton two days after she sought a restraining order against him. Suzanne Kreiter/Globe Staff

Last week, my neighborhood and our state lost another victim to domestic violence ([“A marriage of travails ends with brutal death.”](#) Page A1, July 18). Three more children will grow up without a mother, and a father has been charged with first-degree murder.

While the media have reported on homicide cases and candlelight vigils, Beacon Hill lawmakers have before them legislation to curb this violent trend that begins with coercive control and too often ends in murder.

Coercive control in its many forms — emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, technological, financial, and legal — is the foundation of domestic abuse. Simply put, it restricts one's safety and autonomy through the use of isolation, fear, manipulation, and threats.

What happens behind closed doors spills into our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, affecting generations to come through trauma and other effects.

As a domestic abuse survivor, I will continue to speak out and advocate for all who have been silenced.

Massachusetts [lawmakers have a collective choice](#): Do nothing [or pass An Act to Improve Protections Relative to Domestic Violence](#). Let's not wait until another life is lost.

Carmen Aliber
Newton

The writer is a founding member of the statewide Together Rising Above Coercion (TRAC) Coalition.

Letter to Local Paper on Local Issue

Vote 'yes' to change Select Board term

Marblehead Current April 8, 2023

The Marblehead Select Board has a very unique service format, a one-year term. No other Select Board or School Committee we know of has a one-year term. Most towns have a three-year term for a reason. It improves governance and builds commitment. Article 44 proposes moving to a three-year term to do just that while maintaining cherished traditions.

Governance

Many tend to think of the Select Board as a legislative body, but it is an executive body, as the board functions collectively as a mayor. When we think of any executive position — be it mayor, governor, or president — they are always multi-year terms. Why? So that long-term strategies, initiatives, plans and sub-committee leadership can be developed carefully and thoughtfully over an extended period of time.

We want our Select Board to focus on running the town and not running for reelection. Presently, in any given 12-month period, a Select Board candidate will have run two campaigns. Think about that. Twice in 12 months, three times in 24 months — planting lawn signs instead of working on budgets!

Moving to a three-year term would align with the School Committee and other Select Boards in the area. In any year, one or two seats would be up for election, hence the term “staggered.” This allows for an experience base to remain as new people come on board. Would we really want a freshman class of five Select Board members, year after year, every year? No, we would not.

Some like the one-year term so we can quote “throw the bums out.” But frankly, today's Marblehead voters are a sophisticated bunch with social media and internet research capabilities that were unheard of even a few years ago. Also, with a smaller field, it allows voters a chance to focus on individual candidates so as not to let the “bums” in to begin with.

Commitment

Town government in the year 2023 is complicated stuff. We have some huge issues in front of us, including ARPA projects, structural deficits, cash management and rebuilding a crumbling infrastructure of neglected roads, sidewalks, buildings and IT systems. We need people committed to three years of learning, listening and leadership. We need committed leadership for the long haul.

Tradition

Marblehead has a long history of preserving tradition while using Yankee ingenuity to keep up with the times. We have preserved Abbot Hall, Fort Sewall and the Old Town House yet kept up with the times by adding handicapped accessibility, energy efficiency and even bathrooms!

Our Town Meeting now features projectors and PowerPoint presentations — unheard of in 1649. The very first Select Board was a group of seven members, all men with a one-year term. No women were allowed at Town Meeting. We have progressed very nicely to a group of five men and women with Zoom calls and a town administrator. Now it's time for another tweak to make the one-year term three years!

One final note: This year's election will go on as usual, with a one-year term. The transition will start with a one-time election transition format to set up the stagger. After that, the elections would look just like the School Committee or other boards.

We urge you to vote YES for Article 44 and preserve tradition and improve democracy!

Jim Zisson

Ear, nose and throat doc weighs in on leaf blowers

Marblehead Current, April 19, 2023

At the 2022 Town Meeting, Marblehead residents voted 252 to 202 to enact a summer break from gas-powered leaf blowers. The bylaw will be in effect this year from Memorial Day through Labor Day. However, the new bylaw lacked enforcement and fines.

This year, Article 48, sponsored by Jeanie (Beatrice) Stahl and others, addresses these issues by instituting enforcement by either the Police or Health departments. Both departments have agreed to enforce this bylaw.

Enforcement is directed to the homeowner, since they hire and direct the landscapers on their property. The first violation is a warning; the second is \$100 fine; subsequent violations are \$200 each. Compared to most other communities' fines, our proposed fines are very lenient.

Also this year, there is Article 47, sponsored by a local landscaper, Todd Norman, which seeks to rescind the summer break bylaw passed last year. We have ample scientific evidence of adverse health effects of gas-powered leaf blowers to support the summer break. The extremely loud and penetrating noise, traveling for great distances and through house walls is one issue.

As an ear, nose and throat specialist (otolaryngologist) at Mass Eye and Ear, I have treated numerous patients over 30 years with permanent noise-induced hearing loss. Excessive noise not only causes hearing loss but has been shown to increase blood pressure, heart disease, stress hormones, and difficulty concentrating and learning, especially in children.

No one will lose a job by not using a gas-powered leaf blower during the summer months; there are minimal leaves. Rakes and brooms are adequate, inexpensive and harmless.

The excessive toxic fumes and exhaust from these two-stroke gas leaf blowers is well documented. One hour of using a gas-powered leaf blower has the same emissions as a modern sedan driving for 1,100 miles.

Please see [this link](#) for more scientific documentation.

Dr. Kathryn A. Breslin

Op-Ed to Local Paper Supporting a State Bill

Right to vote a cornerstone of democracy

Cape Cod Times, January 6, 2022. Suzanne Brock, guest columnist

Around the Cape, the state and the country, people stood out in silent vigil or hosted online vigils in order to recall the horrific event that took place at our nation's Capitol building on Jan. 6, 2021.

What happened then was tragic; however, what is more tragic is that there has been little meaningful action by our elected officials both at the state and especially at the national level to collectively and adamantly assert that violence will not be tolerated and to secure equal, safe and unrestricted voting for all American citizens.

It appears that many of our legislators are quick with a sound bite, but when it comes to actually putting themselves on the line to stand up for the principles that our Democracy stands for, they are missing in action. Massachusetts legislators have yet to pass the VOTES Act. This is pretty amazing — and disappointing — given that Massachusetts appears to be progressive in so many other ways.

The larger failure is evident at the national level, as some legislators stood silent and others voiced their denial that the actions that took place on Jan. 6, 2021 posed a threat. Additionally, if our collective Congressional body was acting to “support and defend” the Constitution of the United States,” there would be a more unified voice with little argument about passing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

If these potential laws need adjusting, then our legislators should be working around the clock to come to a compromise agreement, bring them to a vote and get the job done. This is the way Congress is supposed to work. Instead, nothing is moving.

Some think that our legislators are no longer working for the good of the people, but only for the good of their re-election or their political influence. When keeping the job becomes more important than doing the job, American democracy becomes imperiled. It is incredible that some Congressional legislators, both in the House and Senate, regard themselves as so important that they need to control the process. It has become “my way or no way.” This behavior is unacceptable and unsustainable.

We all need to take some responsibility for the changes that have taken place within our

country. Voters often choose candidates based on single issues that align with what they want. In order for a society to move forward, it may be important for voters to consider what is good for the majority. We all have needs and sometimes compromise is the way forward. The ultimate responsibility for a competent government lies with the voters. If we do not exercise our vote and eliminate those who cannot or will not do their job, the status quo will remain. Voting is the ultimate way to indicate approval or displeasure of the job being done. This is why the right to vote is so crucial for all citizens.

For those of you who wish to remember Jan. 6, 2021, please do so by reaching out to those in office. Let them hear once more that the right to vote for all is a cornerstone of democracy. Ask your state legislators to support Massachusetts' VOTES Act and your Congressional representatives to push for the two national voting rights bills.

Let them also know that if they are not willing to work for voting rights and open, fair and just elections, then they are not doing their jobs and we will hold them accountable. After all that, I think I will add to my vigil a re-reading of the U.S. Constitution and a Prayer for Peace.

Suzanne Brock is president of the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area

Op-Ed in Commonwealth Magazine (state issues “magazine”) supporting a Bill

Lawmakers should back Make Polluters Pay bill: Measure would raise \$75b over 25 years
Commonwealth Magazine Jun 7, 2023

In May, the Massachusetts House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources heard testimony from a large number of voters who had descended on the State House to urge the committee to move forward what is being called the [Make Polluters Pay bill](#).

The legislation would generate \$75 billion over 25 years from the biggest greenhouse gas polluters and fund climate adaptation projects statewide. This bill is vital to help our communities thrive in the face of the climate crisis, and it allocates 40 percent of the revenue generated to directly benefit environmental justice communities.

Make Polluters Pay doesn't put a price on future emissions, but instead requires the biggest polluters to pay a fee based on their share of historic emissions. It is therefore distinct from a carbon tax since it will not be applied across the entire market but only impact the top polluters.

The fact is, somebody *is* going to have to pay. Jon Grossman, who testified on behalf of SEIU Local 509, which represents 20,000 social service and education workers throughout Massachusetts in both the private and public sectors, drove home this point most poignantly: “Will the mother that can't get affordable child care or the high school graduate who can't afford college be the ones to pay for this since the money that would have helped them now has to be spent on seawalls? Will the family with a sibling with intellectual disabilities have to quit their job to stay home with their loved one because services have to be reduced so the state can pay for cooling centers or storm damage?”

Indeed, somebody *is* already paying. [According to the World Health Organization](#), the polluting industries most responsible for the climate crisis are already causing over 4 million additional deaths each year.

Millions of climate victims will follow, whether from [heatwaves](#) or [displacement](#). Those paying the highest price tend to be the poorest, the most vulnerable, and above all, the young. Our children and grandchildren will have to bear the brunt of the consequences of the climate crisis. They will either pay out of their nose for the damages we've caused – or worse, pay with their lives.

As Paul Shorb of Lincoln, a retired environmental lawyer, laid out at the hearing, the polluters pay principle follows clear precedent in environmental regulation. Shorb said the principle is employed in all of the major US pollution control laws — the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and in the strangely named Superfund (cleanup of abandoned waste sites). Shorb also reminded the committee that some eco-taxes underpinned by the polluter pays principle include the gas guzzler tax for motor vehicles; or the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE), a “polluter pays” fine. Make Polluters Pay would set up a similar climate superfund to support adaptation efforts statewide.

As Claire Karl Mueller of Unitarian Universalists Mass Action reminded everyone: It's really part of all our religious traditions. It's the golden rule – do not do unto others what you do not want done unto yourself. In other words: If you mess things up, you must either clean up or pay someone to do so. If you litter, you pay. But up to now, the biggest polluters are not only not paying – they are profiting handsomely. Exxon, Shell, Chevron, and BP, in particular, have profited immensely from emitting greenhouse gas emissions over the decades, and are even now [bringing in record profits](#) in the billions. No question: They can afford to pay.

If anyone is still in doubt about how serious this issue is, that, too, is thanks to the same polluters. Just read Naomi Oreskes and Eric Conway's book *Merchants of Doubt* (2010) – or watch the film [of the same title](#). The fossil fuel industry has been funding climate denial to the tune of hundreds of millions for many years. They knew decades ago how dangerous their products would be, and [they lied about it](#) for decades.

That's why Make Polluters Pay is not just a movement in Massachusetts, but also [nationwide](#) and even [around the globe](#).

Alicia Wu, a high school junior from Sharon, speaking on behalf of Our Climate and the Massachusetts Youth Climate Coalition, highlighted the enormous benefits the climate adaptation projects to be funded by the bill would bring to Massachusetts infrastructure and coastlines, “saving our government billions of dollars in the long-term” and moving the state “towards a brighter, cleaner, and healthier future.”

[Sabine von Mering](#)

We spearheaded state's 2014 gun law; new legislation can build on it; House, Senate, governor must work together to keep Mass. a national leader

[Robert DeLeo](#) and [Jack McDevitt](#) Aug 12, 2023

For nearly 10 years Massachusetts has been one of the states with the lowest rates of firearm deaths. Firearm deaths include homicides and suicides by firearm and firearm accidents. Most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the annual firearm death rate in Massachusetts is 3.4 per 100,000 residents while the national firearm death rate is 14.7 per 100,000, or nearly five times the rate in Massachusetts.

This low death rate is due to strong state level legislation, which has helped produce a relatively low firearm ownership rate. Massachusetts has been viewed as a model that many other states copy to keep their population safe.

One problem with firearm legislation is that new technologies produce weapons not even envisioned 10 years ago and firearm manufacturers often shift the way they build firearms to skirt state level legislation. So as the firearm market changes, so too must the legislation intended to reduce firearm violence.

In 2014, we worked together to update Massachusetts firearm laws following the mass killings of school children in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. Following that mass homicide, one of us, as speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, formed a task force, chaired by the other, a Northeastern University expert in criminal justice issues, to determine if additional legislative changes might make the Commonwealth even safer.

The task force recommended 44 legislative changes intended to close loopholes, improve training, empower local law enforcement, and target resources. The legislation that emerged based on the recommendations was passed by Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate and signed into law by then-Gov. Deval Patrick.

Following the passage of this legislation, Massachusetts, already a comparatively safe state in terms in terms of firearm violence, became the safest state in the country.

It has been nearly 10 years since that legislation was passed and much has changed when dealing with access to firearms. In 2014, 3D printing was just becoming available, but today a 3D printer can be purchased for as little as \$400. These printers can produce firearms that have no serial number and cannot be traced the way traditionally manufactured firearms can be.

These “ghost guns” are increasingly being seized by local police across the Commonwealth after being involved in shootings. In addition to “ghost guns,” manufacturers have made changes in assault style rifles intended to get around the state’s existing assault weapon ban.

To address these and many other developments, the current House speaker, Ron Mariano, and Judiciary Committee co-chairman, Rep. Michael Day, recently put forth the most comprehensive firearm violence prevention legislation since the 2014 statute.

This bill will address the changes noted above and many more areas of concern identified during a listening tour Chairman Day and the members of the Judiciary Committee sponsored this past spring in 11 regions of the state. The bill would require all so-called “ghost guns” to have a serial number embedded on multiple areas of the firearm and to be registered just the same as all other firearms in Massachusetts. It would call for a statewide database of firearms used in crimes that would assist law enforcement agencies by identifying guns used in crimes in multiple communities. It would require firearm training classes to require live fire as part of the training, a commonsense provision but one that does not currently exist in Massachusetts. It would expand the list of individuals who could request an emergency use protection order, or “red flag,” to

include school administrators, medical professionals, and employers. It would also prohibit individuals who are intoxicated or under the influence of marijuana from carrying a firearm.

No single state's legislation can adequately address firearm violence, since individuals can drive to another state with fewer restrictions to purchase firearms. We need federal legislation to comprehensively deal with firearm violence.

Until such national legislation is enacted, each state should do all it can to protect members of its communities. We believe, working together, the House, Senate, and governor could craft a final bill that would maintain Massachusetts's role as a national leader in efforts to reduce firearm deaths and injuries.

Robert DeLeo is university fellow for public life at Northeastern University and a former speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Jack McDevitt is professor of the practice emeritus at Northeastern University and former chair of the Gun Violence Reduction Task Force.