

EXPLORING --- NEW DIRECTIONS

Media Guide 2012



PIONEER INSTITUTE

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

Our Mission

Founded in 1988, Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in Massachusetts through civic discourse and intellectually rigorous, data-driven public policy solutions based on free market principles, individual liberty and responsibility, and the ideal of effective, limited and accountable government.



Jim Stergios is Executive Director of Pioneer Institute, a Boston-based think tank founded in 1988. Prior to joining Pioneer, Jim was Chief of Staff and Undersecretary for Policy in the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, where he drove efforts on water policy, regulatory and permit reform, and urban revitalization. His prior experience includes founding and managing a business, teaching at the university level, and serving as headmaster at a preparatory school. Jim holds a doctoral degree in Political Science from Boston University.



Jim has been interviewed on the BBC and MSNBC, and has appeared regularly on local television and radio news broadcasts, including *Chronicle*,

WBZ, WHDH, WCVB, NECN, Fox 25, WGBH TV and radio, WBUR's Radio Boston, WBZ's *Nightside with Dan Rea*, WRKO's *Tom & Todd Show* and *Pundit Review*. In addition to writing regular commentary as Boston.com's education blogger, Jim's opinion pieces have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The Washington Times*, *The Daily Caller*, and regional newspapers throughout New England. He has been quoted in hundreds of news outlets across the country, including in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Washington Post*, and speaks at national policy conferences.

Email: jstergios@pioneerinstitute.org

Phone: (617) 723-2277 x206

Twitter: @jimstergios



Center for School Reform seeks to increase the educational options available to families, drive system-wide administrative reform, and promote high-quality academic standards and accountability in public education.



Center for Healthcare Solutions explores market-based reforms to rein in the cost and improve the quality of care in Massachusetts.



Center for Better Government promotes competitive delivery of public services, elimination of unnecessary regulation, and a focus on core government functions.



Center for Economic Opportunity keeps Massachusetts competitive by analyzing the business climate in Massachusetts and promoting thoughtful, data-driven policy recommendations.



Jamie Gass is Pioneer's Director of the Center for School Reform. He has two decades of experience in public administration and education reform on both the state and municipal levels. Between 2002 and 2005, Jamie worked at the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and



Accountability (EQA). As Senior Policy Analyst-Technical Writer with the EQA, he oversaw the writing and editing of 80 school district review reports. From 1991 to 1996, he worked for the Dean of the Boston University School of Education/Boston University Management Team in its partnership with the Chelsea Public Schools. Jamie earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Boston University.

Jamie has appeared on WBZ's *Nightside with Dan Rea*, WRKO's *Tom & Todd Show*, WBZ's *Keller at Large*, WGBH's *Callie Crossley Show*, and WBUR. He has been quoted in *The Economist*, *Education Week*, and *The Boston Globe*, and his op-eds are regularly published in *The Boston Globe*, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, *The Boston Herald*, *The Lowell Sun*, *The MetroWest Daily News*, *The Providence Journal* and other regional newspapers. He speaks on school choice, academic standards, and school district accountability at events throughout the state.

Email: jgass@pioneerinstitute.org

Phone: (617) 723-2277 x210



Center for School Reform

- **Oppose the nationalization of K-12 education policy, especially on standards and testing.** Massachusetts' best-in-nation K-12 academic standards were central to the state's rise on national and international metrics. The state's adoption of national standards weakens the quality of academic content in Massachusetts' classrooms and lessens the state's ability to innovate and improve.
- **Support full implementation of the 1993 landmark education law and high-quality U.S. history instruction by adding a related MCAS graduation requirement.** In the state's original plan for MCAS, U.S. History was included as a requirement and was supposed to be implemented for the class of 2012. The current administration has indefinitely postponed the implementation of US history MCAS.
- **Advance a portfolio of public school choice options (charter schools, autonomous vocational-technical schools, and interdistrict choice) as well as private school options.** Achievement data demonstrate that students excel in charter schools, regional vocational-technical schools, and interdistrict choice programs. The data also show that through tax credit strategies more children could take advantage of affordable, excellent private school options.
- **Expand high-quality, accountable digital learning opportunities in Massachusetts.** While Massachusetts' 2010 education law allows for the expansion of virtual learning, the state's education department has promulgated highly restrictive regulations limiting such innovations.



Josh Archambault is Pioneer's Director of the Center for Healthcare Solutions. He is editor and co-author of *The Great Experiment: The States, The Feds, and Your Health Care*. Prior to joining Pioneer, Archambault was selected as a Health Policy Fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington,



D.C. His research centered on the treatment of small businesses in the implementation of health reform in Massachusetts. He has served as legislative director for State Senator Scott Brown and as senior legislative aide in the Governor's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs in the Romney Administration. He holds a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School and BA degrees

in political studies and economics from Gordon College.

Josh has been interviewed on radio and news outlets around the country. His work has been featured in a range of publications, from *The Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Politico*, to *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, and *The Anchorage Daily News*, along with dozens of regional newspapers and other New England area publications. Josh speaks about state and national health care issues, and urban redevelopment and performance management.

Email: jarchambault@pioneerinstitute.org

Phone: (617) 723-2277 ext. 209

Twitter: [@josharchambault](https://twitter.com/josharchambault)



Center for Healthcare Solutions

- **Refocus the Massachusetts conversation about health care costs away from government-imposed solutions toward market-based state reforms.** Few consumer-driven health insurance plans offer good value in Massachusetts due to government restrictions. Pioneer seeks to advance affordable, innovative insurance products and greater consumer choice.
- **Drive public discourse on the need for a federal waiver allowing Massachusetts' Medicaid program to be innovative and cost conscious.** Deep reforms of publicly funded health care programs require federal waivers of current rules. Pioneer will push the state to seek such waivers in order to gain flexibility and room to innovate.
- **Present a strong consumer perspective as the state considers a dramatic overhaul of health care payments.** Conventional wisdom on Beacon Hill is that costs can only be contained through a drastic move from fee-for-service reimbursements to mandated capitation, global payments, and blunt price controls. Pioneer believes real solutions require a consumer perspective.
- **Support tort reforms that will prove cost effective, ensure accountability, and help retain medical talent in Massachusetts.** With malpractice cases taking years to wind through the courts and the real threat of litigation, 83 percent of Bay State doctors admit to practicing defensive medicine. The result is well over a billion in additional costs and the loss of young medical talent.



Mary Z. Connaughton, CPA, is Pioneer's Director of Finance and Administration, and works with the Research Director to promote Pioneer's government transparency initiatives. She was the 2010 Republican nominee for state Auditor. Mary has served on the board of directors



of the former Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and Commonwealth Corporation, on the Massachusetts Commission on Judicial Conduct, as Chief Financial Officer of the Massachusetts State Lottery i, and on the Framingham Finance Committee. Prior to joining Pioneer, she was a partner in the business development firm of Ascentage Group, taught accounting at Framingham

State University and was a senior manager on the audit staff of Ernst and Young in Boston. Mary earned an M.B.A. from Assumption College in 2009, as well as a B.B.A. in Accounting and a B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She is a member of the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants.

While on the Turnpike board, Mary became known in Massachusetts as a vocal advocate for government transparency. Her blog, *Toll Talk*, appeared regularly on The Boston Herald's website and her opinion pieces have appeared in numerous newspapers including *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, and *MetroWest Daily News*. Mary has appeared on several television and radio stations across the state, including NECN, WRKO, WBZ, WCRN, WTKK, WGBH, WBUR, and Talk1200.

Email: mconnaughton@pioneerinstitute.org

Phone: (617) 723-2277 x201

Twitter: @MaryZforMass

Government Transparency

Your Government, Your Schools, Your Money

Pioneer Institute is the leading voice for open and accountable government in Massachusetts. We offer a portfolio of web applications that lets citizens access public information. Through our partnership with MuckRock, a public records service, we uncover important internal documents to tell the backstory behind state spending, economic development policy, health care reform, and education. Read our findings on Pioneer's Blog.



Our 2.0 version of MassOpenBooks.org gives users access to who is receiving government contracts, state employees' salaries and pensions. Data analysis tools help readers probe deeper, to understand how pensions have changed over time, the size of the average pension, and which employment groups earn higher or lower pensions, etc.



A new addition to our transparency toolkit, Munishare.org assembles in one clearinghouse the very best reports generated by local committees to reform local government.



Compare one school to another, districts to districts, and choose your own metrics to do so. Through MassReportCards.org, you can access invaluable information on MCAS scores, dropout rates, and other important indicators of the quality of your children's schools.



How does one city compare to another in terms of crime prevention and public safety, fiscal management, economic growth, and education? MassCityStats.org lets you compare cities, or even compare a city against itself years ago—and, again, you get to choose the metrics important to you.



The Center for Economic Opportunity

- **Lower the state corporate tax rate in exchange for reductions in narrowly targeted tax credits.** Massachusetts has a high corporate tax rate and a complex array of tax credits and reduction programs. Replacing tax credits, whereby the government picks winners and losers, with lower, across-the-board rates will provide a fairer and more attractive environment for entrepreneurs to grow in.
- **Reduce and remove unnecessary and costly regulations, and gain adoption of a framework for cost-benefit analyses of state regulations and legislation.** In 2012, Pioneer will initiate a regulatory reform working group representing a wide array of business interests to identify and streamline unneeded and burdensome regulations, and to create a more durable framework to guide future state actions related to business regulation.
- **Maintain the freeze on unemployment insurance and lay the groundwork for a UI reform in 2013, as the economy improves.** Massachusetts' unemployment insurance stands out for the generosity of its benefits and duration, and its relatively easy eligibility requirements. Resetting benefit levels to meet national norms and requiring employers with frequent layoffs to pay more will decrease the overall cost of UI and encourage hiring.

Center for Better Government

- **Advance pension reforms that provide fair and sustainable retirement support.** Our current pension system has large unfunded liabilities and provides incentives that are very different from the private sector. A reformed pension system would limit unfunded liabilities, provide benefits consistent with private sector plans, and offer incentives to attract a qualified state workforce.
- **Promote radical transparency of public information by giving direct access to government spending data and documents.** Massachusetts taxpayers deserve a thorough account of how tax dollars are spent. They need to know how controversial decisions are made. Pioneer provides on-line data analysis tools and policy leadership to increase government transparency.
- **Encourage performance measurement and the adoption of best practices in state and local government.** Goal setting and performance measurement should be the cornerstones of public accountability. Too many public entities fail to do either, or provide either to the public. Pioneer's focus in 2012-13 is on local governments and the state's transportation bureaucracy.
- **Advance competitive contracting of public services, when the quality of the service can be improved and the cost lowered.** Just as competition has driven innovation and lowered costs in the private sector, the public sector can benefit from competition to provide public services.



Erin Blake is Pioneer's Director of Development. Most recently she served as a Finance Manager for Charlie Baker's gubernatorial run. Erin has also worked on the Romney for President 2008 campaign and at the Massachusetts State



House as Legislative Aide to former State Rep. Susan W. Pope. She has also engaged in freelance fundraising for various non-profit organizations and political figures. Erin obtained a B.A. in English Literature and Communications from Denison University.

At Pioneer, Erin is focused on growth strategy, building key constituencies such as young professionals, and enhancing Pioneer's Membership program for its core supporters.

Email: eblake@pioneerinstitute.org

Phone: (617) 723-2277 ext. 204

Twitter: @erineblake

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Membership

Pioneer is only as good an organization as the people around it. All Pioneer donors get timely updates on our latest research products, media appearances and policy forums. We encourage all donors to attend policy forums of interest. Pioneer membership is a commitment to take a more active role in driving the direction of Massachusetts public policy and begins with an annual gift of \$1,000 or more.

Through our event series we engage members on topics of broad intellectual, policy and cultural interest. Pioneer holds three annual signature events:

- **The Hewitt Health Care Lecture** presents timely health care debates to an influential gathering of leaders in medicine, research policy, and business.
- **The Better Government Competition Awards Dinner** recognizes and rewards innovations and accountability in government, features high-profile national leaders.
- **The Lovett C. Peters Lecture in Public Policy**, named in honor of our founder, honors individuals distinguished for the significance of their accomplishments and contributions to society.

In addition, Pioneer holds numerous Member Breakfasts throughout the year. The breakfasts, open exclusively to Members, allow attendees in-depth exposure to presenters who are experts in their fields. The smaller room setting of these events encourages attendees to engage in lively discussions.

In 2012, we initiated the "Pioneer New Leaders," a network of younger professionals who will become the next generation of market-oriented reformers. Pioneer New Leaders will also receive exclusive VIP invitations to breakfast lectures and signature events, and the opportunity to network with Pioneer's community of supporters.

Contact Erin Blake to learn more about opportunities to become more involved in Pioneer's important work.





85 Devonshire Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109

T: 617.723.2277 | F: 617.723.1880 | E: pioneer@pioneerinstitute.org

www.pioneerinstitute.org | Facebook.com/PioneerInstitute | Twitter.com/PioneerBoston

