[Elizabeth Finn] With that in mind, and I will start that. Awesome.

So, for goals, we want to demystify our government officials. We want to make them a lot more accessible. And sometimes when we think about government officials, we see them as like someone that's so different from us, but they’re just some other person. And so, we want to make sure that everyone gets to know our senator today.

We're also going to learn about policy position, so when you think about questions, think about policy positions that the senator may hold and make sure to ask him questions about that.

And we also want to get students more excited about government in general.

[Syeeda Rahman] So, just some housekeeping, just some ground rules, just be really, really respectful. Think about the goals that we just went over today. Respect one another. We know how to do that. And one mic, so one person speaks at a time. Don’t talk over one another. If you really just say something or get something out, feel free to use the chat. And then also be mindful of other people's time. We really, really appreciate Senator Boncore for taking the time out for being here, so ask questions that will be helpful to our goals. Step up, step down. If you notice yourself participating too much, let other people participate as well and ask their questions. And also, just have fun. For asking questions, raise your hand, we'll call on you. You can use the reaction button and you can raise your hand, and we'll call on you. And you can introduce yourself and then ask your question.
And you can also put your questions in the chat if you don't want to unmute and ask it yourself.

[Finn] Awesome. Thank you for that. So, as we get to know the senator today, please ask as many questions as you'd like. So, now we would like to pass it to Senator Boncore so he can briefly introduce himself and talk a little bit about his district. So, we'll give it to him to take it away.

[Senator Joseph Boncore] Well, thank you. Good afternoon to everyone joining. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to have this conversation today, and I hope it is a conversation. Because I'm not looking forward just to speaking at you guys, I want to engage and have this be the first of many conversations with Suffolk Votes. So, to Suffolk Votes, to Elizabeth, Syeeda, thank you for working so closely with my office to coordinate this event. I'm so proud to represent Suffolk University in the Massachusetts State Senate. The Suffolk campus sprawls across the First Suffolk and Middlesex district. From the Ridgeway Gym on Beacon Hill, the residence halls and academic buildings downtown, all the way to the Modern Theatre. And even to the baseball and softball fields, as well as the soccer fields that are currently in East Boston.

Suffolk students and alumni have a long-storied history of working in the State House. Many colleagues of mine in the Massachusetts State Senate have graduated from Suffolk. Many Senate staffers and interns that work in the building, especially my chief of staff,
Maggie Randall, is a Suffolk... I guess, a double Ram from Suffolk, and she was actually featured last month I think, she’s probably going to kill me for saying this, in the Suffolk online magazine, alumni magazine. So, it’s definitely an article you should check out.

So, beyond Suffolk, the downtown Boston and Beacon hill area, the First Suffolk and Middlesex district really is representative of my old town of Winthrop, the city of Revere, the communities of East Boston, the North End, Downtown, as we spoke about, Chinatown, the South End, Bay Village, and Boston, as well as Cambridge,

and over the Longfellow bridge, MIT, up to Riverside to the neighborhood of Cambridgeport.

My areas of interest in the Senate, previous to be joining the Senate, I was a public defender and most of the district courts around Boston, so criminal justice reform is really the reason I ran for the Senate and something that I’ve worked hard to see through in the last five years in office. I am chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation, and Then I was reappointed to that chairmanship this year. Obviously, transportation infrastructure is critically important, not only to our economy and how we get around, but to the environment, and ensuring that we have an accessible, safe, and reliable public transit system in this Commonwealth is of the utmost importance. So, last year I was proud to carry a $17 billion bond bill through the legislature.
and have that signed into law by the governor to really modernize our Commonwealth transportation project. Prior to serving as chairman of the Committee on Transportation, I was chairman of

the Committee on Housing. And I think, really, we accomplished a lot during my time there.

Previous to joining the Senate, I was chair of the Winthrop Public Housing Authority. And I think that experience has really guided my legislative decisions around increasing access to

affordable housing, or housing that is affordable, promoting transit-oriented development,

and addressing the gentrification area situation that we're seeing in Boston. So,

this year I filed significant legislation that would create a process to sale eviction records,

so reduce some of the hurdles and barriers people have when facing housing. But like I said, I don’t want to just speak at you, I want to speak to you,

so at this time, I think it's a good time just to open this up for conversation.

[Finn] Awesome. Yeah. So, for the questions...

First of all, thank you so much for just sharing that. And so, now it's our chance to ask

questions, so you can either raise your hand and we can call on you, or also put them in the chat.

I have a question that we can actually start with. So, your district is large and includes a lot of
different cities and towns, wards, precincts, and it's Boston and it's the surrounding areas,

and it's a very diverse population. So, how do you ensure that every citizen and every
06:59 community and all the different interests are represented?

07:03 [Senator Boncore] Yeah. I mean, I think it's creating access to my office is tantamount to being a representative.

07:10 I think we're elected by the constituents we serve, so ensuring that those constituents feel

07:15 that they have access to my office, really, is the most important part. Boston is a very diverse

07:24 city, and the communities within it really tell the story of the history of the city, the progress

07:31 the city has made, and what the future of the city holds. Boston's makeup of government, obviously,

07:37 is a city councilor and a mayor, but through the BPDA process, we have what's known as community

07:44 groups that are very active and engaged with all the issues happening in the neighborhood.

07:49 So, that's a good alternative for me to be able to talk to

07:52 a group who's really concentrating on the issues around the neighborhood,

07:57 having those conversations, and then seeing how I can be helpful.

08:04 In other communities I stay well-engaged in the city of Revere with the mayor of the city

08:09 counselor, meeting with students, just like we are, high school students, college students,

08:15 and really whoever wants to have a conversation. This is my full-time job, and it's what I do.

08:24 [Finn] Awesome. Thank you so much for that.

08:32 [Rahman] I also have a question. Jason can go first, actually.

08:40 [Jason Wright] Hey, Senator. Hope you're doing well. My name’s Jason. I work for the University’s
Office of External Affairs. Just kind of a general question for you. I was wondering what advice you would give to any person that was looking to or thinking about running for public office.

[Senator Boncore] Yeah. I mean, I would say the best advice is let your experience lead, go find the experience you want to be the change you want to see. I got very active in political campaigns. That's how I met someone like John Nucci, who is the Vice President of External Affairs. Because I was a community kid, and campaigns are a lot of fun and can be a lot of fun. Maybe not so much in this COVID era,

but as we build out of that, campaigns can be a lot of fun. But I think when you engage the system in that way, you meet people who are of similar mindsets, you create a network for yourself.

And then, I don't think you need to concentrate completely on running for office. I think you can get involved in many levels of government and have another career. I mean, at some point,

I think the opportunity we'll meet you to seek higher office, where it'd be like a full-time job,

but the majority of the good work that happens in government in campaigns and elections is through volunteer work and people who step up and volunteer for this, volunteer for that,

in your own communities. The neighborhood groups that I'm talking about, no one's paid to do that,

they're all volunteers. So, volunteering around those groups, getting familiar,
10:25 familiarizing yourself with the issues in your community, I think that's most important. You

10:31 should never want to run for office because you want to run for office. You should run for office

10:35 because you feel like the energy of your community and you feel like you can make a difference.

10:42 I think for so many of us, no one plans for running for office, so much of it is the timing

10:48 of where we're at culturally, as a city, as a state, as a federal government. And meeting that
10:54 with your preparedness, your preparation, like, that you're in these conversations,

10:59 that you're in the rooms where people are talking about legislative changes, policy changes,

11:05 cultural changes. And I think it'll find you, in a way, if you're really looking for it.


11:25 [Senator Boncore] Maybe I should have talked a little more at the front end.

11:30 [Rahman] So, you mentioned that you work with transportation,

11:33 and I was wondering, because a lot of the students at Suffolk are commuter students

11:38 and transportation can add up overtime, especially like public transit, do you have any plans to help

11:46 students cover those costs or anything to help us not spend as much money?

11:52 [Senator Boncore] Yeah, no. I think that's a great question. It's a question I've thought about over the

11:59 last two years a lot. And what I really believe is that there's a lot more work to be done in

12:05 transportation. Fortunately, we passed the transportation infrastructure bill last year

12:11 that's about a $17 billion investment in public transportation,

12:15 and transportation generally in the Commonwealth. That coupled with the federal infrastructure bill
12:20 that's coming down the pike from the federal government, which on the high end,
12:24 we could receive about eight billion additional transportation dollars for, could be
three. We'll
12:29 see what happens when it leaves the House and goes over to the Senate. I'm very
optimistic about what
12:38 the house will do with that bill, but I'm kind of on the fence as to what the Senate will
do.
12:42 So, there are infrastructure and investments that are being made,
12:46 but I really think there's always more to be done in creating a transit system that's
12:53 more equitable, more accessible. And as we think about climate resiliency and what
the future of
13:01 our green system is going to look like, there’s investments to be made there. And
13:06 some of that is investments in cleaner buses, cleaner trains, but a lot of that is
operational
13:13 and creating programs for people on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale,
creating programs for
13:22 students. And I really think we need to shift the paradigm in how we look at public
transportation
13:28 in this Commonwealth. For too long, it's been looked at as like a business model,
right?
13:36 And we need to raise so much money to deliver the public good that public
transportation is.
13:44 And I think that's really antithetical to a good transportation policy. We can say that,
well,
13:51 ridership is down, and it has been, right? So, through this public health crisis and
pandemic,
13:58 we've seen ridership on the commuter rail dip as low as 3%,
14:04 three to 10% for the entire pandemic, and really, not a lot of signs of it coming back. Even
the subway system... I mean the Blue Line, I don’t think, has dipped below 10% ridership,

but that's only the height of it during the pandemic was like 17% ridership. So, they lost 83%

deep of their ridership and the revenue gained from that ridership. But we're serving a certain

amount of people, and the Blue Line was the line that runs through Suffolk mainly. It serves so

many frontline workers, right? Emergency workers. And that's why you saw the ridership numbers dip.

But we'd never say, "Listen, gas, like natural gas, the users are low this year, so let's stop

building that infrastructure." We don't look at water bills and say, "All right, water bills are

down, so let's not provide any more water." No, we need to look at public transportation in the

same way as public good. So, this year I filed what I'm calling the Transportation New Deal

which is really a starting point. It recognizes the initial set of policies that we must undertake

to move Massachusetts forward and build out of this pandemic by modernizing our transportation

system and ensuring regional equity and socioeconomic equity, excuse me, on our system.

So, we focused on a couple of key policy areas. The first policy area that's gotten

a lot of attention is a policy of making the MBTA fare-free for buses, and I think that's something

that would help Suffolk students. We want to see people utilize public transportation. We
15:52 really don't want to see Suffolk students or anyone calling TNCs or Uber and Lyft, because

16:01 that creates a lot of congestion on our roadways. So, we also have a low-income fare program that

16:08 we'd be pushing for that as part of this bill, where just like anything else with Department

16:13 of Transitional Assistance and public goods, if people make up under a certain amount of money,

16:20 they'd have an opportunity to get a reduced fare on the trains and the commuter rails.

16:25 I'm also proposing a fare freeze. We've seen the cost of public transit go up more than 300%

16:36 over the past 10 years, right? Your train fares, your buses fares have gone up exponentially.

16:42 All the while, gas taxes and the cost of driving has really not gone up at all. So,

16:50 when people look at that from a 10,000-foot view, it’s like we're encouraging people to drive and

16:56 not encouraging people to get on public transit. We're making it more difficult

17:00 for people to get on public transit. And then you don’t have to wonder too hard why we have worst in

17:07 the nation congestion in greater Boston, worst in the entire country. I think we're third this year,

17:13 but for the past three years, we've been worst in the nation. Because we're not building enough

17:18 infrastructure for pedestrians, for bicyclists, but we're making it easier for people to drive.

17:24 So, things like that, piloting a late-night service on the MBTA service.

17:29 If you guys are studying late or you’re going out, quite honestly, you can get home

17:36 on public transportation, because I think that’s important. So, just coming at it with a different
outlook, that public transit is a public good, and a reliable, efficient public transportation system

is really the system we need to build out of this pandemic and create greater health and economic

opportunity for people in the Commonwealth, including Suffolk students.

[Senator Boncore] Yeah. So, it's a good question. This past session we passed the Next Generation Climate Bill,

which would build a roadmap to greenhouse gas efficiency, to lowering our numbers, and setting

policy goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

in our buildings, in our transportation sector. The transportation sector is like a 68% contributor to all greenhouse gas emissions in this state, in the country, so it's something we

need to wrap our head around. We did that all last year and the governor vetoed it,

so he vetoed the entire bill that was going to be No Next Generation Climate Bill.

But this year, due to the leadership in the House and the Senate,

before even committees were formed and in a normal cycle, the legislative session starts,

there's a bunch of bills filed, committees are formed, committees look to those bills. The ones
19:30 they want to report out to the floor, in the House and the Senate, get reported about favorably. It's

19:35 usually a six-month process before we start taking votes on legislation... But kudos to the Speaker

19:42 of the House, Ron Mariano and Senate President Karen Spilka. They fast-tracked legislation

19:48 around the climate. We were able to take a vote on that bill last month, so that is the first step,

19:56 I think, in setting out a map for climate adaption management for greenhouse gas emission goals. But

20:04 there's more work to be done, and there's really work to be done on every level of government.

20:08 You see in the city of Boston with, and like you said it's... And

20:12 most of my district is really on the water, around the water, so as we're developing a city,

20:20 as we're building infrastructure in the neighboring towns, we really need to think

20:25 about what Boston's going to look like in 2030, 80 years out. And we need to build buildings that

20:31 are coastal resilient buildings that can protect the shoreline and protect more inland too. So,

20:38 I think, you're starting to see in the city, and you've seen it through Marty Walsh's leadership,

20:44 really envisioning Boston out to like 2040 and what the development plans are,

20:50 what coastal management is going to look like. And in the legislature, too.

20:55 I mean, I filed a bill this year to ensure that every vehicle leased by the Commonwealth,

21:02 whether that's a firetruck, a police truck, DPW truck, a MBTA bus, to ensure that they're all zero

21:11 emission vehicles by 2030, that we're only buying and leasing vehicles that are climate friendly and
21:20 reduce our carbon footprint by 2030. I think the bill we did this year is a good first step, but

21:27 obviously, there's more work to be done, especially in the area of transportation.


21:35 [Rahman] We have a question in the chat, and then we’ll move to Adam. Yvette says, "Follow up question

21:42 with the committee work with transportation. After your final report on the RMV in January,

21:47 were you surprised by the issues that RMV is having with inspection stickers and their vendor?

21:53 Can you talk about a time in this work you’ve felt discouraged and how you moved forward?"

22:01 [Senator Boncore] Yeah. I mean, listen, there was no worst time to be the chairman of transportation with the RMV

22:09 issue that happened two years ago. Seven people were killed by someone who essentially shouldn't

22:16 have a license. I think the RMV, what we learned later, learned that the RMV's infrastructure

22:25 was such that out of state violations were not being dealt with in the RMV,

22:33 and they were essentially being put in a closet. So, what I mean by that is we had a hearing,

22:39 an oversight hearing, with the Committee on Transportation

22:42 after these people died, unfortunately, when they were hit by a trucker.

22:49 And we found out that people's licenses that were suspended in other states for violations,

22:58 that information, although we were paying for a system as a Commonwealth that would deliver that
information to us, once that information was being delivered to us, we were doing nothing with it.

And you can read about how that hearing went down, but essentially... There's a picture of me in The Globe, I think, holding up a picture of boxes and boxes, they were just stacked on each other, that were found in a room, in a closet literally, in the RMV in Quincy that had never been processed.

Thousands upon thousands of violations. So, does this surprise me? I would say, it would take a lot to surprise me having to do with how the RMV operates. Well, fortunately,

would say that this isn't really an RMV problem as much as it is a vendor problem, and the vendor that they hired had some glitch in their computer system with the software that processes inspections. And it was, I think, Massachusetts and seven other states that work with this vendor have had this similar problem with the glitch in their software system.

So, I wouldn't lay blame at the feet of the RMV for something they really have little control over. They've actually been helpful in reaching out to local law enforcement, making everyone aware of the program. And no one’s going to get a fine or get pulled over for having an old inspection sticker. There’s going to be a grace period.

People who have violations will get more time. Yeah. I mean, I've seen a lot with the RMV.

This, I would say, is more on the vendor than it is the state itself.

[Rahman] Let's move to Adam.

[Adam Westbrook] Hi, Senator. Thanks so much, again, for taking the time today. I'm Adam,
I'm the Director of the Center for Community Engagement here at Suffolk, and so we just really appreciate you being here with us and talking with us. One of the things that I found in the work in the Center is that this generation is energized to make change. But one of the things that I've found, some students are very skeptical of government as the best place to make change. So, I'm kind of curious if you could talk a little bit about maybe some of the things that you're most proud of. You've already talked about several examples, but what are some things that you're most proud of that you've been able to accomplish and that you're working on where you feel like government is a place where change can actually happen?

[Senator Boncore] Yeah. I mean, I would say when I was the chair of the Housing Committee, we know we have a gentrification problem in Boston, we know that we're losing generations of students, like your generation, graduating from Suffolk. Where are they going to go? Where are you going to get a job that's going to enable you to afford to live in Boston where the cost of housing is like second or third in the nation highest. Creating affordable housing options is something we endeavored to do when I was chairman of the Housing Committee, and we created a bond for $10 billion to make investments and offset some of the developer's costs as they developed, to ensure that 20% of the housing being built in the city of Boston remains affordable. So, we can keep the pipeline... We have some of the greatest institutions of higher education...
26:39 in the entire country right in our own city, but we can't maintain any of their students

26:44 in their first five years out of college. So, that's one of them. The work we did to

26:51 eliminate on the hands-free driving bill last year in the Transportation Committee, to take the cell

26:56 phone out of the hands of drivers and really save lives, those committee hearings were difficult.

27:04 Families would come before us and talk about how they lost somebody.

27:08 But one of my proudest moments in the legislature was with the gun reform bill we did two years ago

27:16 and the red flag gun bill. And what that was, it was really a youth-led movement or power-up movement. I mean, students, they were coming to the State House and demanding action

27:29 after we had another mass shooting. And I think in the Commonwealth,

27:33 we heeded their advice, quite honestly. A lot of students just cut school for the day, came up to this rally, came into the State House, and testified at the hearing

27:45 regarding the red flag gun bill. And it changed. Students across the Commonwealth that maybe that didn't show up at that rally were having rallies in their schools,

27:53 and I think as a legislator who's on the younger side of things, I work with people... Believe it

28:07 or not, I'm one of the younger senators in the building. I mean, I can identify with that and

28:15 I can meet students where they are and have those conversations, and I'm willing to. So, I

28:21 think seeing that red flag gun bill be passed and really see the power of a student-led movement...
The greatest legislative wins in this country for civil rights, voting rights, to gun reform,

has all been student-led. I'd love to talk more with students who believe that government

isn't the best place to do that work. I mean, I think it truly...how that will benefit or to the detriment of your generation. You're going to be dealing with some of the policies that are in place. That $17 billion transportation bill is a five-year bill,

so we're going to be spending money into the next five years that's going to affect how your economy works for the next 20 years. So, the conversations are important to keep having.

I would just encourage students to stay involved and not be deterred because when you don't take advantage of the power you have, I really think the power takes advantage of you.


[Rahman] Jessica, you can ask your question.

[Jessica Mejia] Good day, respected Senator. My question is how do you compartmentalize pressing issues or issues tempted to be resolved in parallel to each other? How do you determine what to focus your energy on?

[Senator Boncore] Yeah. That's a really good, and I'm very fortunate to have a very competent staff who helps me compartmentalize things. Because like there's a lot to do in my day to day. I started out with the meeting around COVID-19 vaccinations in east Boston,

and I had that update. I rolled that into a meeting with a group of constituents to talk
30:26 about legislative priorities. I have this meeting, tonight I'm meeting with the neighborhood group.

30:33 I'm getting pulled in a lot of different directions. But I would say that I have

30:40 my priorities in the legislature that I work on continually, and those are... They

30:45 they're expansive, but it's climate reform, it's transportation, it's housing, and it's criminal

30:52 justice reform. And I shouldn't have said climate reform, just the climate generally, although the

30:56 policy needs the reform. The climate is what the climate is. So, those are my four areas.

31:03 And just like I'm chair of the Transportation Committee, there's a Senator that chairs each

31:09 and every committee, so through engaging with my constituents and bringing my issues usually

31:14 to the chair of jurisdiction over these issues, we can really work on bills. And the legislature

31:20 isn't taking up like 30 bills a week, right? We're taking up two or three bills a week. So,

31:28 with enough lead time, we can have an understanding of what the bills are,

31:34 think about how they affect our constituents, have conversations with our constituents about them,

31:39 and then there's an amendment process on the floor to really make the change your constituents

31:46 want to see happen. Hopefully your constituents are working on the front end of these issues

31:50 as the bills move through the legislature, but if not, that's what our job is to do.

31:59 [Mejia] Thank you so much. I was wondering, may I just ask you just a secondary question?

32:03 [Senator Boncore] Yes.
32:04 [Mejia] How do we improve the public education system so every child gets a great education regardless of income, when many are suffering from home insecurity, also known as homelessness?

32:11 Because it goes hand in hand in the public school system in Boston.

32:22 [Senator Boncore] Yeah. I mean, I think that's a really great question. I think when you're dealing with an issue like housing that I've dealt with and ensuring that people have access to affordable housing, it does have an effect on some of the other social health determinants like where they're getting their medical care, where the students are going to school.

32:45 And like you said, when a family becomes homeless, it’s very disruptive to that student who is...

32:55 Kids are always in a disruptive state in learning and growing, and when we make it much more difficult for students because they have to move because they're evicted or they are forced into certain neighborhoods because it's affordable...

33:14 And those are sometimes neighborhoods without access to public transportation, without access to quality education. There are many detrimental effects to something like a housing issue.

33:31 So, to deal with the student end of things, a lot of this student funding is supplemented by the state. Right? So, in each municipality there’s taxes collected on real estate and excise taxes,

33:47 and that money goes to fund the school system. But not all school systems and communities are created equal, so the state supplements the education funded on per pupil instance each and every year.
34:03 We were working for the last 30 years off a funding formula from like the 1980s

34:11 that was missing large swaths demographics of students. Minority populations were wholly going

34:20 under counted due to their immigration status, or whatever the situation was.

34:25 The last year, the legislature passed the Student Opportunity Act, which changes

34:34 the formula funding. I think it's like an $8 billion investment in public transportation

34:39 over the next six years. And unfortunately, last year due to COVID, we weren't able to fund the

34:46 first... I mean, over seven years. We weren't able to fund the first seventh of that program, but now

34:53 this year, we're going to fund this year's part of the formula. So, we should see these effects. And

35:02 many gateway cities, many poor communities had a seat at the table. Boston did exceptionally well

35:10 due to the Boston delegation at the legislature, which I'm happy to be a part of, in ensuring that

35:15 Boston students would not be under-counted and would have what they need over the next seven

35:20 years. So, like everything else, there's some work to be done, but I think the Student Opportunity

35:25 Act is really the foundation that we're going to build a more equitable educational system on.

35:30 [Mejia] That's great to know. Thank you so much, Senator.

35:33 [Senator Boncore] Happy to answer it. Thanks for the question.

35:36 [Finn] All right. So, we have time for probably one more question, so I will let Katherine ask hers.

35:43 [Katherine] Thank you. Hi, Senator. I was wondering if you could comment a little bit about how you
work with local officials and if because of that you have an opinion on the Boston mayoral race.

[Senator Boncore] Yeah. So, I've engaged with... Just in government,

we're always at the same events with the city councilors, with our local representatives, and

we have really good relationships. Lydia Edwards from East Boston's one of my best friends,

not just in politics, but in life. So, we have really good relationships. We're always working

with city councilors on local issues. They’re sending bills up to us, and we're trying to be

as helpful as we can. Things like educational funding, transportation funding, creating

affordable housing within their communities. So, as we look at the Boston mayoral race,

which you don't have to look for, it'll find you, there's obviously... I think there's seven

people in the field right now, or maybe more. I know at least four of them are city counselors.

And I have a relationship with each and every one of them. There's also a state legislator who's

running for office, there's someone from Marty Walsh’s administration that's seeking the job.

So, I'm having conversations with all of them. When they ask me for their endorsement, I'm asking

them a lot of the questions you're asking me, “Well, what's your position on affordable housing?

What's your position on education funding? What’s your position on public transit?" And I think,

when people are on the ballot, communities win because these issues come to light.
They're going to have to have debates in public forums about the homelessness issue in Boston,
about testing in Boston to get into certain schools, and the adverse effects that has had on students of color. These issues are going to come up time and time again, and we're really going to have an opportunity to decide who the best person is for that job.

Now, I have a relationship with all of them, and they've all, I think except for one or two have asked me for my endorsement,
but I'm going to let it play out a little longer. I want to see where they are on these issues and,
ultimately, support who I think is going to make this city a better place to live.

Thank you for that. And I just have one last wrapping up question, is like, as students, what's the best way for us to engage with your office and engage with state government in general?

Yeah. I mean, I would just say pick up the phone, write an email. I hate to use the adages like no stupid questions, but any issue you're having,
or if you just want to know how something works, our job first and foremost is constituent servants and making sure that our constituents are having their needs met. So, if you have a question about government, about a bill, about a policy that we’re talking about, or maybe one we're not talking about, I think you should really reach out to us and demand a response from us. Right?

Reach out. We get a lot of emails every day. In my current email box, I have 85,000 emails
that we're getting through. They're not all from today, but they're from the past couple of years.

But I mean, and also sharing your personal story. I know a lot of advocacy groups have people interested send form emails to their legislators. Those become a little bit of white noise.

If we're taking up a bill, we can get 300 to 1,000 emails a day on that bill because people are just submitting a formal letter. So, a letter can be a little more personal, I think it's really important. But feeling free to reach out to us at any time, I mean, that's what we're here for. My staff will put our contact information in the chat box. But again,

I think this is helpful, too. Right? Rather than having, whatever, 15 different conversations, having one conversation with 15 people is a good way to do it. Let's continue with this on a more regular basis, and we can expand the group and we can have more conversations. It'll be really helpful, in not just informing you guys, but informing me as well.

Maggie Randall] I would just add to that if you’re doing any kind of research project at the state or local level, and you're wondering, “Okay, what is the state doing on climate change?

Or have you taken up this issue?” Just email us, and I'm happy to touch base, particularly for Suffolk students, but definitely email or call us.

[Finn] Awesome. And thank you so much to Senator Boncore for coming with us and talking.

It's really important that our local officials are accessible and we can build relationships, because
once you have that relationship, you're more comfortable and you're more willing to advocate for the issues that you care about, and you get more involved in government once you know who your representative is other than just voting. So, we really appreciate it. And thank you to Maggie for help setting this up. And thank you for everyone for coming. We really appreciate it. And so, we hope for all of you to join our event next week, next Thursday. We'll have City Councilor Ed Flynn coming, so it'll be really great. So, thank you again, and have a great week, everyone.