



Mo Cowan

President, Global Gov't Affairs, Policy & Dev. Mkts. at GE

Vignette
by National Journal

Life In Brief

Current Title: U.S. Senator (Retired)

Born: April 4, 1969

Hometown: Yadkinville, NC

Education:

- JD, Northeastern University, 1994
- BA, Sociology, Duke University, 1991

Family:

- Wife, Stacy
- Two sons

Work History:

- President, Global Government Affairs, Policy and Developed Markets at GE, 2018-Present
- Vice President of Global Litigation and Legal Policy at GE, 2017-2018
- ML Strategies, 2013-2017
- Of Counsel, Mintz Levin, 2013-2017
- Resident Fellow, Harvard University Institute of Politics, 2013
- Senator for Massachusetts, 2013
- Office of Governor Deval Patrick (D), 2009-2013
- Member, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky, and Popeo, 1997-2009
- Attorney, Peabody & Arnold, 1994-1997

Quick Summary

A lawyer and government affairs executive who had a brief stint in the US Senate, Cowan currently heads public policy and advocacy for GE while assisting with local efforts to promote diversity and spur economic growth

- Grew up in North Carolina and settled in Massachusetts after attending law school at Northeastern University, beginning a career in commercial and civil law
- Worked for former Governor Deval Patrick (D) in various capacities, including as chief of staff, advising Patrick on issues including health care costs, gaming, and judicial selection
- Appointed to the US Senate by Patrick to succeed John Kerry (D), who had resigned to become Secretary of State, serving in that position for five months
- While in Congress, Cowan's first vote supported re-authorization of the 2013 Violence Against Women Act and chaired the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food and Agricultural Research, sponsoring legislation to make recourse loans available to agricultural producers of specific crops
- Returned to the private sector after his stint in Congress, rising to CEO of ML Strategies, a bipartisan government affairs and policy consulting group whose clients included future employer of Cowan's, GE; helped GE during the relocation of their headquarters to Boston
- Joined GE as vice president of litigation and legal policy, where he oversaw litigation, enforcement proceedings, investigations, and compliance and rose to president of global government affairs and policy; currently directs the company's government relations and public policy engagement and oversees the Boston operations
- Committed to building a diverse and equitable workforce and has been active in helping his employers and the state hire minority candidates
- Involved in efforts to foster economic development and has been involved in initiatives to help grow the local Boston economy



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Approach and Motivations

Raised in the post Civil Rights Movement era, Cowan draws on his personal experience with racial discrimination to advocate for systemic change; values unity in politics, an ideal he pursued in Congress and in his private life

- Outspoken on the acts of racial discrimination he witnessed at an early age, including seeing an attempted cross burning and the KKK distributing literature in his hometown; uses his position to advocate for racial justice and has authored an op-ed on his experience as a Black man and the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests
- Believes the corporate community needs to assess and change hiring and promotion practices to be in line with their DEI goals; says actions like social media campaigns are not enough to drive sustainable change
- Advocates for greater unity and representation in government, stating that instead of division, politics needs to promote equity and inclusion and avoid hyperpartisanship; frequently worked across the aisle during his time in Congress
- Says his career in state government gave him an appreciation for the work that government affairs professional do; learned that government affairs has the ability to not only advance client interests but also help policymakers understand issues from the perspective of industry

Policy Position and Areas of Focus

In and out of politics, Cowan has been heavily involved in promoting equality and economic growth in his community

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: *Record of fostering diversity in the public and private sphere;*

advocates for investments in justice, equality, and protections against discrimination

- Helped former Gov. Mitt Romney (R) and former Middlesex District Attorney Gerard T. Leone Jr. (D) find minority lawyers to fill judge appointments and to recruit diverse candidates
- As hiring partner, helped recruit more Black lawyers to law firm Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo
- In Congress, cosponsored legislation to prohibit employers and any federally-assisted educational program from discriminating against employees, applicants, or students on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity; cosponsor of the 2013 reintroduction of the Violence Against Women Act, which was signed into law
- Alongside other minority business executives, launched the 2020 New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund, a fundraising operation to combat systemic racism in Boston and across the state
- Joined Mayor Marty Walsh's (D) 2020 Boston Racial Equality Steering Committee, to help the city invest in nonprofits and initiatives that empower Boston's Black and Brown residents

Economic Development: Committed to economic growth in Boston and beyond, assisting with the establishment of workforce development programs and new business prospects

- While in Congress, cosponsored various pieces of legislation aimed at workforce development and job creation; supported economic incentives for small business owners such as small brewers, increased research and job training into new fuels sources, and invested in urban job training
- As a member of the GE Foundation board, has supported investment in local economic development, including \$2.5 million towards an advanced manufacturing training program at Lynn Vocational Technical Institute to help close



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the skills gap and fill workforce needs on the North Shore

Roderick Ireland, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, are mentors to Cowan

Core Communities

Network of professionals active in Massachusetts politics and the legal sector

MA Politicians: *Maintains diverse relationships with prominent voices in state politics*

- Former counsel, chief of staff, and advisor to Governor Deval Patrick, who appointed Cowan to the US Senate and to co-chair the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force; Cowan names Patrick as a formative career mentor
- Has continued to work with and maintain bipartisan relationships with former colleagues from the governor's office, state government, and Congress
- Tapped by Marty Walsh for Boston's Racial Equality Steering Committee, where he works with other community leaders under Chief of Equity Dr. Karilyn Crockett
- Helped former Gov. and current Sen. Mitt Romney and former Middlesex District Attorney Gerard T. Leone Jr. with staffing

Legal Community: *Connected to local law firms and lawyers*

- Worked as an attorney at law firms Peabody & Arnold and Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo; before joining GE, Cowan joined ML Strategies, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mintz Levin
- Former president of the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association
- Friendly relationships with lawyers in the local academic community, including Ron Sullivan, Professor at Harvard University
- Wayne Budd, former US attorney and current senior counsel at Goodwin Procter, and Hon.

Relevant Financial Information

Has donated to Republicans and Democrats with the bulk to Democratic campaigns

Publications, Media and Speaking

Selected Works, Interviews, and Speeches: *Frequently speaks on the importance of civic engagement and diversity to local Boston audiences*

- Op-ed, *Who's Gonna Take the Weight: Mo Cowan and Being Black in America*, published in Boston Magazine, 2020. <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2020/08/10/mo-cowan-black-in-america/>
- Op-ed, *Trump and Clinton Aren't What's Wrong With the Political System -- We Are*, published in US News, 2016. <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-05-19/trump-and-clinton-arent-whats-wrong-with-the-political-system-we-are>
- Speaker Series, spoke about diversity before community leaders at Boston's Chinatown, 2013. <https://sampan.org/mo-cowan-engages-and-inspires-in-chinatown/>

Professional Affiliations

- Board, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate
- Board, Massachusetts General Hospital
- Member, US Association of Former Members of Congress
- Board, MassChallenge
- Board, Mass General Brigham
- Board, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



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- Board, The New England Council
- Board, Eastern Bank Corporation
- Advisory Committee, Cambridge College
- Advisory Committee, Duke University
- Advisory Committee, Dimock Community Health Center

Family and Personal Background

Humble upbringing in Yadkinville, North Carolina

- Father was a machinist for Ingersoll Rand Co.; his father passed away when he was 16 and Cowan was raised by his mother, a seamstress
- Experienced overt acts of racial discrimination in his hometown; has described witnessing the KKK attempt a cross burning and distribute literature; despite this, says his childhood is not defined by the negatives
- From his mother, says he learned that hard work would create opportunity; Cowan became the first in his immediate family to attend a four-year college



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