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# Black Excellence on the Hill

*A celebration of Black culture, excellence, and  
achievement in the Commonwealth*

Massachusetts State House  
Great Hall of Flags  
**Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

## **The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus**

Representative Carlos González, Chair

Representative José F. Tosado, Vice-Chair

Representative Chynah Tyler, Treasurer

Representative Bud Williams, Clerk

### **Senator**

Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz

### **Representatives**

Rep. Russell E. Holmes

Rep. Frank Moran

Rep. Aaron Vega

Rep. Andres Vargas

Rep. Marcos Devers

Rep. Nika Elugardo

Rep. Liz Miranda

Rep. Jon Santiago

### **Executive Director**

Lucas DeBarros

**Black Excellence on the Hill**  
**Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Opening Remarks**

*Representative Carlos González*  
*Chair, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

**Remarks**

*Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito*

**Remarks**

*House Speaker Robert DeLeo*

**Remarks**

*Senate President Karen Spilka*

**Remarks**

*Treasurer Deborah Goldberg*

**Keynote Address**

*Rev. Talbert Swan*

**Honoree Recognition**

*Representative Chynah Tyler*  
*Treasurer, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

**Closing Remarks**

*Representative Bud Williams*  
*Clerk, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

**Honoree Photo**

**Networking Reception**

## **Keynote Speaker**

*Rev. Talbert Swan*

Bishop Talbert W. Swan, II is the pastor of the Spring of Hope Church of God in Christ in Springfield, MA. He serves the International Church Of God In Christ as Assistant General Secretary, Senior Advisor to the Presiding Bishop and Clerk to the General Board. He is the Jurisdictional Prelate of the Nova Scotia Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

Bishop Swan is the President of the Greater Springfield NAACP, President and CEO of COGIC Family Services and host of the Spoken Word Radio Broadcast. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Western New England University, a Bachelor of Science in Religious Studies from Charter Oak State College, a Master of Arts in Theology from Hartford Seminary and a Master of Divinity in Urban Ministry from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Bishop Swan also holds graduate certificates from Hartford Seminary in Black Ministries and Harvard Divinity School in Faith Based Economic and Community Development. He has completed all academic requirements toward a Doctor of Ministry from Piedmont International University.

Bishop Swan has facilitated the implementation of Health and Human Service related programming for the past 21 years in his roles as pastor and non profit chief executive. He has written, overseen, and tracked grants for youth programming, HIV/AIDS prevention, substance abuse counseling, gang intervention, residential recovery, job training, peer education, mentoring, financial literacy, and chronic disease management. Bishop Swan is a consummate community activist and is respected for his work in the area of human rights across the region. He has served on many community boards and has received numerous awards for his work. His work has been highlighted in publications such as; the New York Times, Boston Globe, Washington Post, Emerge Magazine, Gospel Today and Sojourner's Magazine to name a few. He has also been featured on Fox News, Black Entertainment Television and New England Cable News along with local and regional news outlets. Bishop Swan is a four-term member of the Alumni Council at Hartford Seminary, a member of the Black Alumni Council of the Harvard Divinity School and the current National Chaplain of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., the fifth largest African American fraternity in the country.

Bishop Swan is married to the lovely Evangelist Cynthia A. Swan, who is actively involved in supporting her husband's ministry and community work. An anointed vessel in her own right, First Lady Swan stands supportive by his side, interceding for the success of his work. They are proud parents and grandparents.

## **Honorees**

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Noval Alexander

Framingham

Noval Alexander is a member of the Framingham School Committee and Framingham School Building Committee. He was also a leading advocate for the successful passing of Framingham's "Yes on Fuller" campaign, securing the necessary local funding to build a new local middle school. Noval, father of two and Framingham native, relies on his selfless leadership style and determined perseverance in all that he does.

## **Nominating Legislator**

Representative Jack Patrick Lewis - 7<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

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James Arana

Northampton

James Arana is a social worker, facilitator, mediator, and community organizer with 35 years of experience working with people of all ages and diverse cultural background. James inspires and challenges individuals, youth programs, community organizations, and international NGO's to strengthen their work in transforming masculinity, domestic violence prevention, gender equality, organizational visioning and program development, and cultural competence.

## **Nominating Legislator**

Senator Joanne Comerford - Hampshire, Franklin, and Worcester

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## Chantel Bethea

### Worcester

Chantel is the Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of Women in Action, Inc. which offers assistance to women through comprehensive services, tailored to meet their individual needs. WIA takes a dual approach to serving women by working both directly and collaboratively with other community organizations located in the Worcester Area, as well as throughout Massachusetts to better enable advocates to assist clients and create and strengthen networks of strong women. With over 20 member agencies women are able to access assistance with self-esteem, financial literacy, therapy, legal help, peer mediation, security planning and emotional support. Chantel is an inspiration to those who know her. Her positive attitude and her inner strength serve as a model to other women in the community. Chantel is a Board Member at RCAP Solutions and Co-Chair of the Worcester County Commission on the Status of Women.

### **Nominating Legislators**

Senator Michael Moore - Second Worcester  
Senator Harriette Chandler - First Worcester

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Deb Britt

Mansfield

As the Executive Director and Founder of the National Black Doll Museum of History and Culture, Deb Britt leads the first museum in New England and the second museum in the United States dedicated to preserving the history of black dolls.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Representative F. Jay Barrows - 1<sup>st</sup> Bristol

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Andrew Cade

Springfield

Andrew Cade is a community leader who serves as Senior Vice President of the Urban League of Springfield, and as the Chairman of the Springfield Cultural Council.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Eric P. Lesser - First Hampden and Hampshire

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Maria Carrasco

Lynn

Maria Carrasco has been deeply involved in the community, both as a citizen and an elected official, since she moved to Lynn from the Dominican Republic in 1982. Carrasco served five terms on the Lynn School Committee and was the first Latina to be elected to municipal office in Lynn. She has a record of working tirelessly to promote diversity and strengthen different ethnic communities in Lynn by canvassing during elections, registering people to vote, and promoting education through workshops. She has also served on a number of boards including North Shore Community College, the Lynn Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

Carrasco currently serves as Chair of the New Lynn Coalition, which was formed in 2011 with a mission to organize all sectors of working class people in the region into a unified, permanent, political and economic force that is both union and non-union, and transcends racial, linguistic, ethnic, citizenship, and gender boundaries.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Peter L. Capano - 11<sup>th</sup> Essex

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Barbara Collins

Boston

Barbara Collins is the embodiment of public service and community activism. A dedicated leader of the National African Community Organization and former Director of the IBA Community Technology Center, Ms. Collins demonstrates selfless devotion to the improvement and betterment of our communities. Her incredible impact has been felt throughout the Commonwealth, culminating in honors from Senators Warren and Markey, the Mayor of Boston, the Boston City Council, and the Governor. As an integral member of our community, Ms.

Collins continues to better the City of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the lives of her friends and neighbors.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Jon Santiago  
9<sup>th</sup> Suffolk District

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Paulo DeBarros

Dorchester- Bowdoin/Geneva Neighborhood

Paulo Debarros is a Cape-Verdean American leader in the Bowdoin Geneva neighborhood of Dorchester. Mr. Debarros is an active member of Bowdoin Geneva Main Streets and Executive Director of CVC Unido, a nonprofit organization that focuses on Cape Verdean youth development . He’s a former Boston Public School teacher at the Jeremiah E Burke. Mr. Debarros is an active resident in his community.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Nick Collins  
First Suffolk

Charles F. Desmond, Ed.D.

Danvers

Over the last four decades, Dr. Charles Desmond has had a long and distinguished career in higher education. He presently serves as the CEO of Inversant, the largest parent-centered children's saving account initiative in the Commonwealth. He is the past-chair of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and was a higher education policy advisor to former Governor Deval Patrick. In many and varied roles, he has been at the forefront of educational access, retention, and college completion issues for low and moderate-income citizens here in the Commonwealth and across the nation. A Fulbright Scholar and philanthropic leader, he has been a tireless advocate for increased attention, support, and engagement with programs serving at-risk children, adults, and the communities in which they reside. He is Chair of the University of Massachusetts-Boston's Board of Visitors; he also served the University as Associate Chancellor and as Dean of the College of Public & Community Service. He earned his Education Doctorate in instructional leadership from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and his Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology from Northeastern University. He has received numerous honors and awards from local and national organizations and he is the recipient of three Honorary Doctoral degrees bestowed by Framingham State University, Westfield State University and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. He is a twenty-one year member of the Danvers Human Rights and Inclusion Committee and President of the Friends of the Danvers Human Rights and Inclusion Committee. He is a past Chair of Building Bridges Through Music in Lynn and his current roles include service as a Trustee of Teachers College, Columbia University; Senior Fellow of the New England Board of Higher Education; member of the North Shore Medical Center Board of Trustees; and Chair of the Advisory Board of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst College of Education. He is on the Advisory Board of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane, LLP, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and a decorated veteran of the U.S. Army, receiving both Silver and Bronze stars. He visits Selma, Alabama

annually to honor the Civil Rights Movement past and present during the re-enactment of the Bloody Sunday march. Dr. Desmond is married to Phyllis Boyd Desmond; they have three children and one grandchild.

### **Nominating Legislators**

Senator Joan B. Lovely - Second Essex District  
Representative Theodore C. Speliotis - 13<sup>th</sup> Essex

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Mira Donaldson

Framingham

Mira Donaldson is young community leader. Mira is the president of Framingham High School's Black Student Union. In her role she has supported and advocated for the renaming of Christopher Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day as well as marched for gun reform as a part of the national movement, March for Our Lives. Additionally, Mira is an honor roll student.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Representative Maria Robinson - 6<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

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Fatou Drammeh

Revere

Fatou has more than 30 years of experiences working in the field of social justice, economic development, participatory adult education, program development and fundraising. She earned her Master's Degree from the Heller Graduate School at Brandeis University. She currently works tirelessly and passionately for the Revere Community School (RCS). The school aims to unite life-long learners with community and partner resources to empower its adult learners and encourage workforce development; financial literacy; health and wellness; community awareness; and civic participation. RCS offers learning opportunities from informational seminars to credit-bearing college courses for Revere and neighboring residents of all ages to contribute to a diverse, interdependent, and changing world.

Fatou is also the founder and former Executive Director of Women Encouraging Empowerment Inc., a non-profit organization in Revere that work to educate, advocate, protect and advance the rights of immigrants, refugees and low income women and their families. She also worked for Cooperative Economics for Women (CEW) as a trainer, curriculum Developer and Associate Director. Fatou also served five years on the funding panel and board of directors at the Haymarket People's Fund, and the allocation committee for Boston Women's Fund, where she aided in funding different community projects throughout the state of Massachusetts. Fatou is currently a board member of Haymarket Peoples Fund, Women Encouraging Empowerment Inc. and a member of the Network for African American and Immigrant in Solidarity of Boston. She is also a member of REVERE CARES Coalition. Fatou received a Partnership Champion Award from REVERE CARES. Fatou is dedicated to the City of Revere and has worked tirelessly on behalf of its residents to improve their quality of life. She is a strong advocate for immigrants.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Speaker Robert A. DeLeo -19<sup>th</sup> Suffolk  
Senator Joseph A. Boncore - First Suffolk and Middlesex

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Shirley A. Edgerton

Pittsfield

Shirley Ann Session Edgerton is a Community Activist, Diversity Trainer, manager and avid cyclist. Ms. Edgerton was raised in Mount Vernon, New York where she attended local schools. She graduated from Herbert Lehman College ( City University of New York) with a B.A. and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts with a M.Ed. She began her trek in community work while exposing and involving her now three adult children in community activities.

She is the founder of the Women of Color Giving Circle, the Rites of Passage and Empowerment program and founding Director of Youth Alive performing Arts group.

The Rites of Passage program is five years old, targets junior and high school girls. This holistic program celebrates girls' entry into

womanhood and provides the girls with skills and knowledge to be successful and independent women.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier - 3<sup>rd</sup> Berkshire

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Ralph Edwards

Swampscott

Born in Alexandria, Louisiana in the 1960s, Mr. Edwards has dedicated much of his life to advocating for civil rights and social justice. Mr. Edwards grew up during one of the most important and intense periods of the civil rights movement, noting to the Swampscott Reporter that black people in the South had to put their jobs, and often their lives, on the line, just to exercise their right to vote.

Mr. Edwards has served as an officer in organizations including the NAACP, the Black Alcoholism and Addictions Council, the YMCA, and TASH, an international disability and advocacy organization. Through Mr. Edwards' tenure as Chair of the Swampscott Democratic Town Committee for more than ten years, the Committee worked with 15 community colleges to register hundreds of students to vote. Last year, Mr. Edwards retired from his role as Chair of the Committee, telling the Swampscott Reporter that he is most proud of supporting future leadership in the community.

"We've made an effort to not only talk about the importance of community involvement but actually model that," he told the newspaper. "We've worked hard laying a groundwork for the future."

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Lori Ehrlich - 8<sup>th</sup> Essex

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Phyllis Ellis

Brockton

Phyllis Ellis is the President of the Brockton Area Branch NAACP. She previously served as 1st Vice President and 3rd Vice

President. She is Chair of the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics Committee, producer of the NAACP Forum which airs monthly on the Brockton Community Access cable station and Chair of the MLK Breakfast Committee. She is committed to advancing the mission of the Brockton Area Branch NAACP, which is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race based discrimination.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Gerard Cassidy - 9<sup>th</sup> Plymouth

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Dennis Everett

Haverhill

Through musical and artistic expression, Denis Everett serves as a powerful community activist and raises awareness for victims of gun violence in his community.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Diana DiZoglio - First Essex

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Gloria Fox

Boston

During her 31 years of service to the 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk District, Representative Gloria Fox was a staunch advocate for her constituents while legislating at the State House. She also worked diligently as a member of the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus to make sure that all Black and Latinx people in the Commonwealth had a voice on Beacon Hill.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Chynah Tyler - 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk

Kaidi and Chris Grant

Roxbury

Chris and Kai Grant are not only committed to black economic independence through various business ventures, including the popular Black Market, but also have a strong foothold in increasing civic engagement in the John Eliot Square neighborhood of Roxbury. They have helped reinvigorate their neighborhood association to ensure that residents have a voice in community decisions.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz - Second Suffolk

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Andre Green

Somerville

Andre Green is a member and former Chair of the Somerville School Committee, representing Ward 4. He has worked for numerous advocacy organizations, and is currently Executive Director of FairTest, focusing on fair and open evaluation of students, teachers and schools.

**Nominating Legislators**

Representative Christine Barber - 34<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

Representative Denise Provost - 27<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

Representative Mike Connolly – 26<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

Senator Patricia Jehlen – Second Middlesex

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Dr. Victoria L. Greer

Sharon

After four years with the Cambridge Public Schools, Dr. Greer took over as Superintendent of the Sharon Public Schools in July 2017 and has done an exemplary job of leading the school system as it charts its course for the future. With a new high school building project in the planning stages and multiple new initiatives underway, Dr. Greer has

provided both a fresh perspective and passion for education that will have a positive impact on the Sharon community for years to come.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Louis L. Kafka - 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolk

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Kirsten Henry

Franklin

Leading her school's Diversity Club and organizing a panel discussion which provided the community insight into the life of a student experiencing diversity at KPHS.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Rebecca Rausch - Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex

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Reverend Thomas Hughes

Fitchburg

Reverend Thomas Hughes is an active and respected leader in the city of Fitchburg, who has dedicated his entire life seeking ways to serve people around him through his ministry and dedication to our youth. His presence in our community inspires a countless number of people.

Reverend Hughes is a retired employee of Fitchburg High school, where he worked for over 20 years as the Director of Student Services.

He has also served on many municipal boards and committees including United Way, Three Pyramids Community Development, and the Multi-Faith Based Coalition. He is also the Chaplain of the Fitchburg Police Department.

Rev. Hughes' ministry started in 2006, when he was ordained a pastor in the Church of God in Christ, Greater New Hampshire. He served as State Youth President, State Finance Chairman and eventually the Superintendent. And as the superintendent of the Judah District, he started a commission for planting many churches.

In the fall of 2006, Reverend Hughes was appointed pastor of New Antioch Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He served in New Hampshire for two years before coming back to Fitchburg and

establishing the New Creation Community Church, where he currently is the Senior Pastor.

Reverend Hughes is committed to establishing a ministry that's closely based on the needs of the community. He offered one of the first Back to School Rallies, sponsored many food drives, soup kitchens, and much more.

In addition, Reverend Hughes is also the president of More Than Conquerors, a non-profit organization that extended from the New Creation Community Church. Through More Than Conquerors he opens a residential group home for displaced youth, and is planning on re-establishing an after-school program for the youth in Fitchburg.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Senator Dean A. Tran - Worcester and Middlesex

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Ty Allan Jackson

Pittsfield

Ty Allan Jackson is an award-winning children's book author, literacy advocate, publisher and captivating motivational speaker. He is the founder of Big Head Books, LLC, a literacy organization that aims to introduce children to the joys of reading. Ty travels to schools, youth organizations and various professional settings nationwide inspiring children and educating adults about the impacts of illiteracy. A two time TedX presenter, Ty believes that literacy is the foundation for a successful life and promotes it with humor and enthusiasm.

His work as an author and literacy advocate earned Ty the Massachusetts inaugural Martin Luther King Jr. Content of Character Award, as well as citations from former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, former State Senator Ben Downing, and the House of Representatives. Ty's empowering books have been featured on CNN, NBC Nightly News, The Steve Harvey Show, PBS and countless media outlets. One of Ty's proudest moments came in 2011 when his books were gifted to former First Lady Michelle Obama by his hometown Mayor.

Ty's first self-published book, Danny Dollar Millionaire Extraordinaire: The Lemonade Escapade, is a fun and empowering

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story that teaches children about the value of saving, investing and entrepreneurship. It was adapted into a play and was also lauded by the largest African-American operated bank in the United States as a useful tool to teach inner city youth about finances. In response to the success of this book among children and educators, Ty co-founded an empowering financial literacy program called Danny Dollar Academy, which includes a four-week long financial curriculum for 3rd-5th graders. Ty also co-founded the Read Or Else movement, a program created to shine a light on illiteracy and how it impacts our country. With each purchase of a Read Or Else garment, a book is sent to a child in a homeless shelter.

A Bronx, NY native, Ty now lives in Pittsfield, MA with his three children. He continues to write entertaining stories featuring relatable characters for children around the world.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Senator Adam G. Hinds - Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin & Hampden

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Raymond A. Jordan

Springfield

As a former member of the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, Representative Jordan was committed to uplifting communities of color in the Commonwealth. He served the 12<sup>th</sup> Hampden district for 20 years before becoming the New England Special Project Officer for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

His community activism did not stop short in D.C or Beacon Hill as he also remained committed to youth through the his 5A program which focuses on academics, athletics, and arts.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Representative Bud Williams - 11<sup>th</sup> Hampden

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Natalie T. Kanellopoulos

Falmouth

Natalie T. Kanellopoulos stated last year when running for the Falmouth School Committee, “My children are older, and I feel like I have the bandwidth to become more involved. I took baby steps starting with the PTO and school council.”

Natalie won election to the Falmouth School Committee in May 2018 as the top vote getter in a four-way race for three seats. She was a dedicated volunteer at East Falmouth Elementary School as a member of the PTO, school advisory council, and working in the classroom while raising her three boys.

Natalie also served on the superintendent search committee, playing a role in hiring the current superintendent. She has set a priority to gain an understanding of all the services for students with social and emotional needs as well as support for their peers and teachers. She says that teachers are called upon to do so much more than teach as they help these students.

After college she worked with a Cambridge-based nonprofit, Conflict Management Group, where she was trained in active listening and conflict management, skills she has carried to her work as a grant writer with nonprofits over the years. Most recently she has been working with the Cape Arts and Entertainment Inc., the parent company of Cape Cod Conservatory and Cape Symphony. She has also worked on domestic violence and sheltering of battered women.

Ms. Kanellopoulos grew up in Falmouth and graduated from Falmouth High School. “I love this community,” Ms. Kanellopoulos has said. “It boils down to that this is home, and it’s time for the next generation to step up and be active participants.”

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative David T. Vieira - 3<sup>rd</sup> Barnstable

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Dr. Jibreel Khazan

New Bedford

Dr. Jibreel Khazan (born Ezell Alexander Blair Jr.) is a civil rights activist who is best known as a member of the Greensboro Four; a group of African American college students who, on February 1, 1960, sat down at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina challenging the store's policy of denying service to non-white customers. The protests and the subsequent events were major milestones in the Civil Rights Movement. By the spring of 1960 the Sit In Movement had spread to 54 cities in nine states in the South. Jibreel's lifelong pursuit of equal rights and dignity for all has had a prominent impact on both the American Civil Rights Movement and the Movement for global human rights.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Senator Mark Montigny - Second Bristol and Plymouth

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Anna Kouadio

Haverhill

Anna arrived in Massachusetts in 2013, fleeing a war torn country - Ivory Coast. Anna has thrived academically at HHS. She maintains a 3.82 GPA, while taking Honors and AP courses. She has received awards for academic excellence throughout her 3 years. Most notably, she has received student of the month in Spanish, Health, and Physics, and has received the most outstanding student award in Math, English, and History. In September, she was inducted into the National Honor Society and the National Business Honor Society.

Since sixth grade, Anna has sought opportunities to help others in communities both near and far. She began to get involved with her church - the Cavalry Baptist Church. Anna has participated in their "Things Alive" program, which focuses on bringing social and cultural awareness through volunteering. She is also a part of the "American Baptist Women and Girls", where she has served as a mission coordinator for a national leadership team and now serves as an Ambassador. As an ambassador, Anna has been able to travel to

Chicago, New Orleans, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia to participate in programming meant to empower girls across the US. She has also done volunteer landscaping for summer camps, helped to repair homes, worked at food drives, and held orientations for youth campers. Most recently, she has assisted in hosting an Intercultural Conference and Festival, guided walkers on fundraising walks, and canvassed to get people vote.

Outside of school and volunteering, Anna spends her time working at Dunkin Donuts or at home applying for college scholarships. Moreover, she still argues every now and then that she needs to do "more". She is a servant leader.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Andy X. Vargas - 3<sup>rd</sup> Essex

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Trott Joseph Lee

Fall River

Trott is a very active member of the community. He has been an outspoken candidate for local public office, served the behavioral health community and now serves as the Executive Director of the Veteran's Association of Bristol County. Trott, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, brings energy, passion and his service to our country to his daily duties at the Bristol County Veterans Center. He is bringing new ideas and energy to this position and to the hundreds of Veterans and their families that benefit from the services offered at the center.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Carole Fiola  
6<sup>th</sup> Bristol

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Rev. J. Anthony Lloyd

Framingham

Rev. Lloyd is pastor of Greater Framingham Community Church, the largest predominantly African-American church in the MetroWest area, with a congregation that draws from African, Caribbean, and European

cultures. Previous to joining the Greater Framingham Community Church, he was associate Dean of Students at Gordon College and continues to serve there as an adjunct faculty member.

During his 26 years as the church's spiritual leader, Rev. Lloyd has served on innumerable task forces, nonprofit boards, and committees in the region, often serving as a conduit to the Black community to help integrate these efforts. Through his tireless volunteer leadership responsibilities—be it serving as chair of the board of Wayside Youth & Family Services, organizing lunch service in the church for nearby shelter residents, or playing a pivotal role in establishing a Framingham Community Center aimed at underserved families--Rev. Lloyd (called simply "Rev" by all who know him) tirelessly creates and widens pathways that empower members of the greater community to lead more full lives.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Senate President Karen E. Spilka - Second Middlesex and Norfolk

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Colleen Martin

North Andover

Civic engagement in local and national political campaigns, which included overseeing projects to inform voters on important issues and to provide them with rides to polling stations.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Representative Tram Nguyen – 18<sup>th</sup> Essex  
Representative Christina Minicucci – 14<sup>th</sup> Essex

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Nicole McClain

Lynn

Nicole has a strong commitment to public service and her numerous initiatives that she has led through the Lynn Juneteenth Committee, (now North Shore Juneteenth Association). She has raised awareness about Juneteenth, which commemorates the emancipation of the last remaining enslaved people in the United States on June 19th, 1865. This holiday or day of observance is now recognized in 45 states and

has become a renewed tradition on the North Shore because of Nicole's efforts. Additionally, through the Association she has gathered community members, local businesses, artists, and school/municipal leaders to celebrate diversity. Nicole has also been a volunteer at programs such as the "7th Annual Women's Brunch and Conference" in Boston, has been a featured speaker at the Faces of Lynn Magazine Launch, and has participated in the "Black Girls RUN! Boston! among many other initiatives.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Brendan P. Crighton - 3<sup>rd</sup> Essex District

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Richard S. McGhee

Wellesley

Richard has been a community leader in Wellesley for many years, as an elected member of Town Meeting, a contributor to Wellesley's cable access station, and a founding member of the Board of Directors for World of Wellesley, Inc. Although Richard recently retired from his active role on the Board of WOW, Inc., he continues to produce cable television programs on diversity and inclusion for the Wellesley Media Corp. Richard's commitment to his neighbors and community at large has made Wellesley a better place to live.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Alice H. Peisch - 14<sup>th</sup> Norfolk

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Mwalimu Donkor Issa Minors

Boston

Mwalimu Donkor Issa was born in Los Angeles, California, raised in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and has lived in Roxbury since 1989. Working for the Boston Public Schools, Donkor serves as the Targeted Programming Coordinator for the 10 Boys Initiative and also leads the young men's group known as Sankofa MPA.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Chynah Tyler  
7<sup>th</sup> Suffolk

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## Lawrence Nfor

### Leominster

Lawrence Nfor, 35, was born in Ndu, a small town in Cameroon, West Africa. One of seven children, he completed his primary and secondary education in Cameroon and went on to study mathematics and computer science at the University of Buea, where his wife, Elizabeth, also studied microbiology.

With a hope and dream for a better life for their own four children, Lawrence and Elizabeth made the difficult decision to part with their extended family and friends and come to the United States. Lawrence had visited the U.S. previously, in 2003, participating in nearly 80 musical performances in 18 states as part of a cultural exchange program with his church.

The couple applied for the Diversity Visa Lottery Program offered through the U.S. State Department and were selected. After raising \$15,000 to travel, they arrived in the U.S. in 2009 with their children, living with a former colleague for three months before they were able to settle into their own apartment in Leominster and begin a new life.

Getting started was difficult. With no experience working in the U.S., Lawrence worked a third shift factory job to support his family. Attempts to get into the accounting field were unsuccessful until he was encouraged to seek academic and career opportunities through Mount Wachusett Community College.

Lawrence earned his Associates Degree from MWCC, Bachelor's Degree from UMass Amherst, and his MBA in Accounting from Fitchburg State University. Lawrence went on to build his career serving in the business office at MWCC and currently serves as the Business Manager for the college's Access and Transition Office, which oversees the colleges robust college/K-12 partnerships. Lawrence is actively involved in his greater community and strives to make the region a better place to work and live. He serves as a Leominster Public Library Trustee. He serves as an ambassador for the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and was recognized as their Ambassador of the Year for 2017-2018. He also serves as the President of a New England Community of Cameroon Immigrants and is actively involved in his church, the First Baptist

Church in Westminster. He and his wife Elizabeth, a dental hygienist (also an MWCC graduate) have four children.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Natalie Higgins - 4<sup>th</sup> Worcester

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Winfred Octave

Green Hill Park Neighborhood, Worcester

Winnie Octave moved to the U.S. from Saint Lucia in 1979. She moved to Worcester in 1995 and has since become a force to be reckoned with in our city. Winnie is a founding member of the Green Hill Neighborhood Association in Worcester. She has devoted hundreds of hours to engaging neighbors and inviting them to be involved in the organization. In particular, Winnie put a major focus on the two half-way houses in her neighborhood and successfully included the clients in her call to be engaged neighbors. She is a graduate of the Clemente Course in Worcester, the Democratic Ward 3 Committee and election commissioner, an advisory member to Department of Children and Families and Community Connections social service network.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Mary S. Keefe - 15<sup>th</sup> Worcester

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Shirley Owens-Hicks

Boston

Serving in the House of Representatives, Rep. Shirley Owens-Hicks led the 6th Suffolk district for 20 years. In that time she also showcased her commitment to the greater Black and Latinx community in the Commonwealth through her time serving on the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Russell Holmes - 6<sup>th</sup> Suffolk

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## Melvin and Tina Poindexter

### Watertown

Mel and Tina work as a team to build diversity in the ranks of Democrats across the Commonwealth. They work tirelessly to stay in touch with communities across the state, identify opportunities for improved diversity and assist organizations in becoming more welcoming and inclusive. They are Democratic State Committee Members, and in the case of Mel, National Committee Member.

### Nominating Legislator

Senator Will Brownsberger - Second Suffolk and Middlesex

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### Carmen Pola

#### Mission Hill, Boston

In 1980, Carmen Pola was the first Latina woman to run for statewide office in Massachusetts, losing by less than 80 votes. Although she was not elected, this set the stage for later political appointments and brought a higher profile to Latinx politics in the state. "I see it," she said at the time, "as a campaign that will open the door. It says that we are here and we're not going anywhere.

In 1983, Boston Mayor-Elect Raymond L. Flynn appointed Pola to the post of Constituent Services Coordinator. The position was newly created and "designed to respond to the individual concerns of Boston residents... [and] help people find the services they need." For example, Pola helped coordinate responses to the city's "No-Heat" phone call line in the mid-1980s.

As part of that office, she focused on expanding access to local government, not only through answering constituent concerns but also external programs like voter registration drives.

After leaving Boston's city government, Pola returned to community-based activism and worked at various levels within and outside of government through the 1990s. She helped found Roxbury Unites for Families and Children, La Raza en Marcha, and the Spanish Cultural Program on Mental Health, and was involved with numerous non-profit organizations. She also continued to hold local political

appointments, such as the chair of the Ethnic Linguistic Minorities Committee, vice chair of the Mayor's Committee on Hispanic Affairs. Besides official appointments, Pola continued to be a member of the Citywide Coordinating Council on Education and Manpower Training Act Advisory Council.

In April 2013, Pola gave a talk on her recent work at the Mission Hill Senior Legacy Project as part of TEDxFenway. The event focused on the ecology of great cities and explored the cultural, technological forces, and leaders that contribute to a neighborhood and city as a whole. Coordinating an organizing training program for seniors, Carmen Pola continues to be a tireless advocate for black and brown residents in our district, especially elders, in the Latinx community and beyond.

### **Nominating Legislator**

Representative Nika Elugardo - 15<sup>th</sup> Suffolk

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Bridget Ray-Canada

Newton

Elected to the Newton School Committee in 2017

Promoted educational equity, educational excellence, and strong fiscal management in her school committee campaign

Active on Newton North Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)

Participates in Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) criminal justice reform advocacy

Engages in youth mentoring

Active alumna of INROADS, an organization helping place diverse talent with internship opportunities

Graduated with a B.S. in Physics from Spelman College; member of National Society of Black Engineers

As a member of the Boston Spelman College of Alumna, served on the 2016 Committee for the Blueprint Conference for Girls at MIT

### **Nominating Legislator**

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem - First Middlesex and Norfolk

Councilor E. Denise Simmons

Cambridge

Her decades of service to the City of Cambridge, first as the Executive Director of the Cambridge Civic Unity Committee in the 1980s, then as a member of the Cambridge School Committee in the 1990s, and since 2002, as a member of the Cambridge City Council, and as the first lesbian African-American mayor in the United States.

**Nominating Legislator**

Senator Sal DiDomenico - Middlesex and Suffolk

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Sharon Stout

Newton

Sharon Stout is a fundraiser and event designer, who is very active in the Newton Community. She lives in Newton corner with her son.

She is currently serving as Co-chair of Newton Democratic party, is one of the Deputy Treasurers of The Mass Democratic Party, and is a trustee of Newton Free Library. She is a very active board member of Emerge, and advisory board member of JALSA.

She has been an advocate for the past 15 years for many boards, social causes and political events in Newton. Under the last 3 mayors, she has organized and fundraised for many of the signature citywide events, like Newton Serves, Harvest Fair, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Newtonville Day.

Sharon has worked in the District Attorney's office, Congressman Kennedy's office, and was even elected as a delegate at Charlotte. She has worked with over 5 dozen local, statewide, and national campaigns over the years, and has been a part of many fundraising committees.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Kay Khan - 11<sup>th</sup> Middlesex

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Benjamin Swan

Springfield

Representative Swan served the 11th Hampden district for 22 years. During that time he also served as a member of the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus. Rep. Swan did not limit his advocacy to the Commonwealth, and even spent time fighting for voting rights in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Bud Williams - 11<sup>th</sup> Hampden

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Jonathan “JT” Thompson

Barnstable

Jonathan “JT” Thompson works daily to spread a message of positivity throughout the Cape Cod community. Whether in his job as a nurse’s aide at Cape Cod Hospital or through his Facebook page *JT’s Chronicles*, JT is constantly working to spread his message of “one love, one family, and one community.” Thompson has gained notoriety through his Facebook page and has now began a wider venture by participating in organizations such as Cape Cod Flag Football, Cape Cod Warriors AAU Basketball and hosting events such as People of Action’s Barnstable Unity Day, Hyannis Open Streets, and the Sass on Main Fashion Show. No matter what JT is doing, he can always be found with a smile on his face, doing his best to remind people of the good in life; “The chance to embrace positivity comes with every beat of your heart – listen to it and ride the rhythm.”

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Will Crocker - 2<sup>nd</sup> Barnstable

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Marcus Vaughn

Wrentham

Through his work for the Joe Andruzzi Foundation, where he serves on the Development Committee and the Champions Circle Committee, Marcus is a dedicated volunteer to helping those diagnosed with cancer in their time of need. Marcus is also an extremely active member of our community, volunteering as a Track Coach at King Phillip Regional High School and a coach for Wrentham Flag Football. Marcus is a true inspiration to all and an absolute, all-around model citizen.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Shawn C. Dooley - 9<sup>th</sup> Norfolk

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Willie A. Wilson, Jr.

Brockton

Mr. Wilson has served as a teacher, deacon, principal, curator, department chair, and community leader for more than 20 years. He has dedicated his life to education and improving the lives of students, and has championed the preservation of history for generations to come.

His commitment and passion for our community shines through in everything he does.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Claire Cronin - 11<sup>th</sup> Plymouth

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Rosemary Tracy Woods

Springfield

Rosemary Tracy Woods is the owner and manager of Art for the Soul Gallery in Springfield, MA which strives to interject art with social justice. She is being recognized for exemplary dedication and outstanding contributions to community service and efforts to promote multicultural understandings with inclusivity through arts.

**Nominating Legislator**

Representative Carlos González - 10<sup>th</sup> Hampden District

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## **Acknowledgements**

*Representative Carlos González , Chair, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

*Representative Chynah Tyler, Treasurer, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

*Representative Bud Williams, Clerk, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus*

*Governor Charlie Baker*

*Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito*

*House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo*

*Senate President Karen E. Spilka*

*Treasurer Deborah Goldberg*

*Rev. Talbert Swan*

*Jasmine Dankwa*

*Tammie David*

*Ryan Dominguez*

*Devin Edwards*

*Carla Moran*

*John Steies*

*Ernest Taylor*