



Latinx Excellence on the Hill

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

Massachusetts State House
Great Hall of Flags
Thursday, October 3rd, 2019

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Opening Remarks

Representative Carlos González

Chair, Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus

Remarks

Senate President Karen E. Spilka

Massachusetts Senate

Remarks

House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo

Massachusetts House of Representatives

Remarks

Secretary Rosalin Acosta

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Keynote Address

Magdalena Gomez

Author & Poet

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

Grand Staircase

Reception

Grand Staircase

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

Honorees

Honoree descriptions provided by nominating Legislators

Socrates Abreu

Jamaica Plain

Born and raised in the Egleston area of Jamaica Plain, Socrates is a Dominican-American man whose love for family, community and food shines through in everything he does. As the owner of Chilacates, a Mexican Taqueria that started on Amory St in Egleston Square, Socrates is committed to hiring local and taking good care of his employees, donating food and staff time to community organizations and events, and making sure each bite is fresh and of the highest quality. While he has successfully expanded in other neighborhoods, he remains committed to his roots, his community, and loyal customers. With the help of local artist Deme5, Socrates created a logo that reflects the passion that goes into his restaurants. Above the row of red chilacate chiles, where the restaurant's name comes from, is the phrase "hecho a mano con amor," or "handmade with love." Our community is lucky to have Socrates as a local business owner who personally understands the economic hardships individuals and families often face living in the city, and how his generosity can and does go a long way in making people from all walks of life feel sated and cared for.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Liz Malia (11th Suffolk)

Dr. Milagros Abreu

Medway / Framingham

Dr. Abreau, an epidemiologist specializing in public health, recognized an unmet health need in East Boston in 2006. Too often, barriers blocked minority residents' access to medical care and food. She felt that those barriers could be lowered through improved health literacy, reduced

medical costs, and connections to health facilities. That year, she founded the nonprofit organization called Latino Health Insurance Program, in East Boston. Noting the rapidly growing Latino population of MetroWest, she expanded the program to Framingham two years later. LHIP's three goals are to offer a community-based, culturally specific program for health insurance enrollment and maintenance to minority residents, connect clients to the appropriate health-care services (including nutrition), and promote a more effective use of preventative services while reducing medical costs. More than ten years later, LHIP has been a trusted source of services available nowhere else in the region, serving hundreds of families and thousands of individuals.

Nominating Legislator

Senate President Karen E. Spilka (Second Middlesex & Norfolk)

Milly Arbaje-Thomas

Brookline

Milly Arbaje-Thomas is doubly focused on the success of the Public Schools of Brookline, because she has been the parent of two Brookline students and the CEO of the METCO program, which brings several hundred students to Brookline every year.

In 2017, Milly led the establishment of Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month celebrations at the Pierce school. The celebration includes banners celebrating the month hanging outside the school, traditional Hispanic/Latino food being available on school lunch menus, and research projects and interactive scavenger hunts for students to learn more about Hispanic/Latino leaders and history. As a result of her work, the program was extended to every Brookline school

Milly was also involved in establishing the Young Scholars program at Pierce School. Similar to the Brookline High School highly-impactful African-American and Latino Scholars program, it aims to promote the success of academically talented African American and Hispanic/Latino students all the while aiding in the positive growth of the student as an academic, minority, and person.

For her commitment to the Public Schools of Brookline and to celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month throughout the school district, Milly Arbaje-Thomas is truly worthy of this recognition.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Tommy Vitolo (15th Norfolk District)

Phyllis Barajas

East Watertown

Phyllis Barajas is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Conexión, (conexion-all.org) a ten month executive mentoring and leadership experience for mid career HispanicLatino professionals. The program focus is on developing HispanicLatino leaders and their executive mentors, most of whom are not HispanicLatino, who come to understand the implication of the nexus between the rising HispanicLatino demographic, socioeconomic factors and the sustainability of the U.S. economy. One alumnus described her experience as a “call to action” that HispanicLatinos can make a positive difference for the future of the country. Among her other accomplishments Phyllis was appointed in 1994, by President Bill Clinton as deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Education offices of elementary, secondary and bilingual education. Before her appointment, she served as the first HispanicLatino assistant dean for human resources at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Upon her return to Boston she was the national Director of Human Resource for Houghton Mifflin Publishing. More recently, she was a core instructor for the 2012-13 academic year at Boston University School of Management Institute for Nonprofit Management and Leadership. She is a Trustee of Eastern Bank, the largest independent, mutually owned bank in New England, with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts. She is the first Latina trustee since the bank’s founding in 1818! Phyllis also is involved with a number of nonprofit boards including the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Trustee and Chair of the BIDMC Community Benefits Committee; the board of directors of the United Way Boston/Merrimac Valley and Jobs

for the Future, a national foundation focused on education and workforce development. She also is a Trustee of the Boys and Girls Club Boston and member BGCB Overseers Leadership Circle. Awards and recognition include: 2016 HISPANIC LIFESTYLE Latina of Influence, as part of National Women's History Month, one of 31 Latina leaders selected from across the U.S. who exemplify Latinas making a difference; Comcast Newsmakers Online, featured in January 2016; The AD Club Rosoff Award 2016 nominee; Get Connected's 8th Anniversary GK100 Boston's Most Influential People of Color; 2016 SBANE Innovations Award Nominee; for the fourth year in a row, one of the El Planeta Powermeter 100 Most Influential, a recognition of individuals who have made an impact in the HispanicLatino community; 2014 the Color Media Group Seventh Annual, All Inclusive Awards; 2013 Get Connected Boston 5th Anniversary Leading by Example, Diversity and Inclusion Award; Boston Business Journal's 20 On the Move; The Women of ALPFA Boston presented Phyllis with their annual Excellence in Contribution to the Latino Community award at their 2011 Summit and in 2009 NSHMBA Boston Chapter singled out Conexión for special recognition for their Advancement of Latino Leadership. Born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, the daughter of Mexican immigrants she now resides in Boston, Massachusetts. She holds a BA in education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a Master's of Education from Boston University.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Jon Santiago (9th Suffolk)

Lesly Borges

Leominster

Lesly Borges is the Domestic Violence Advocate at the Leominster Police Department. She has been an exceptional advocate for domestic violence survivors, helping them safety plan, access restraining orders, and find stability in the community. Previously, Ms. Borges also worked as a Safeplan Advocate for the Massachusetts Trial Court, and as the Homeless Prevention Supervisor at Camillus House in Miami,

FL. Ms. Borges also provides community translation services, and earned her Associate's Degree in Human Services and her American Sign Language Certificate from Mount Wachusett Community College.

Nominating Legislators

Representative Natalie Higgins (4th Worcester)

Senator Dean A. Tran (Worcester & Middlesex)

Dennis Bourne

Norfolk

Dennis J Bourne was born in Venezuela on the small island of Margarita, close to Aruba. His father (who shares the name, Dennis Bourne), worked for General Electric and was a well-known artist, writer and poet from British Guiana. His mother, Gloria Dueñas Camacho, was the widow of the First Secretary to the Ecuadorian Ambassador to Venezuela, Cesar Dueñas Ibarra when she met Dennis' father.

In Norfolk Dennis has been an asset to the community by hiring a number of people, from all walks of life and from all different backgrounds. He has taught many of his employees a new skill (learning how to plaster), so that they were able to make a successful career out of plastering. A few have even gone on to start their own businesses and have credited Dennis with getting them started with their career because they learned the art of plastering from Dennis.

Dennis has worked on many of the homes in Norfolk, Medfield, Plainville, Millis, Walpole, Wrentham as well as other towns in the area in the almost 30 years he's been in business. He has also worked on a number of local commercial buildings and churches in the community.

In 2004 he worked on the Tripp Johnson Family home in Medfield, MA for Extreme Home Makeover. Tripp and Heidi Johnson's son, Will, has Spinal Muscular Atrophy. Will needed accommodations to the house due to his illness. Dennis worked as a sub under Mitchell

Construction and Charles River Contracting for this project. He still has the t-shirt from Extreme Home Makeover!

Nominating Legislator

Representative Shawn Dooley (9th Norfolk)

Jose Burga

Weymouth

Jose Burga was a college student in Peru when his mother moved to the United States in 2004. In 2005, at age 21, Jose immigrated to Massachusetts bringing his little brother with him to live with his mother. After seeing how hard it was for his mother living here he decided to stay and help his mother who was working two jobs to make ends meet and taking free English courses. At that time, they were living in a tiny apartment in less than ideal conditions. Jose worked many jobs until in 2007 when he joined the Carpenters Union as a 1A apprentice. When he became a 4th year apprentice, he was nominated from his local union office as apprentice of the year. He remained with the Carpenters until he joined the Massachusetts Army National Guard as Private (E2) Intel Analyst. During his basic training at Fort Jackson he was named Platoon Leader. After returning from specialized training he served full time for the Massachusetts National Guard on the Massachusetts Homeland Emergency Response Force (HERF). In 2016, he was offered a position with the Weymouth Police Department as a Police Officer. Jose attended the Plymouth Police Academy where he was named Vice President of his class. He currently works for the Weymouth Police Department as a Police Officer and serves as Staff Sergeant and the NCOiC (non-commissioned officer in charge) for the intel section for 1-82nd Infantry Division. In his spare time he volunteers at a local elementary school teaching Spanish, and he is a “host dad” for international exchange students. He resides in Weymouth with his wife Pascal’s and daughter Sarah.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Patrick O’Connor (Plymouth & Norfolk)

Angela Camacho

Roxbury

Angelina Magdalena Camacho has been leading behind the scenes on many of the key advocacy issues that have been at the forefront of our legislative and community priorities for over 20 years. As a community change agent, she has focused on the social building blocks of our residents to bring them from the margin to the center and building pathways for progress for justice sake. From affordable housing rental and cooperative housing to economic equity, youth opportunities and public education advocacy, Angelina has been known as a key strategic professional, a super volunteer and strong parent advocate.

Angelina's list of former service roles is too long to count. Currently, however, in addition to her most important roles of being a mom and faithful leader, she serves on the English Language Learners Task Force, School Committee Selection Panel, Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition, Friends of the Melnea Cass Facility and Amplify Latinx while volunteering at her son's school and lending a hand at community programs and faith centers like the First Tee of Massachusetts, No Books No Ball program, Congregation Lion of Judah and Berachah Church. In all of her roles, Angelina amplifies the power of having faith in the fiercest of social justice struggles, that Women's worth should always have value, highlighting the power of the Parent and that Latino representation matters. As a proud Afro-Latina, she carries her roots from Puerto Rico and Honduras with pride. She'll tell you frequently in dealing with disparities that: "The data points that we see do not always include us, but we can always make sure that our impact counts until it does."

Nominating Legislator

Representative Chynah Tyler (7th Suffolk District)

Aida Castro

Lawrence/Methuen/Merrimack Valley

Aida Castro is the Director of Community Programs at Family Services of the Merrimack Valley. Aida is the first Latinx to be a member of the Agency's Leadership Team. She has been serving the Greater Lawrence Community in different capacities for almost 30 years. Aida emigrated with her family from Puerto Rico to Lawrence in the mid 1980's. She graduated from Lawrence High School and after overcoming many challenges, obtained a Master's Degree in Human Services from Springfield College.

In her role as Program Director at Family Services, Aida supervises and oversees over 13 federal and state funded programs, including a Family Resource Center funded by DCF. These programs provide critical services to the Greater Lawrence Community, including multi-cultural parenting programs, support groups, early childhood services, positive youth development, mentoring, fatherhood engagement, marriage education information and referral resources and education for families whose children range in age from birth to 18 years of age.

Aida's most recent contribution to the community was on September 13, 2018 when the lives of hundreds of families were uprooted as gas fires and explosions began blazing up throughout the greater Lawrence community. Homes were destroyed and lives changed forever, but in this time of great strife, many members of the Lawrence community took on the call of duty and rose up to meet the enormous challenge this tragedy presented. Aida and her staff were among those supporting the residents impacted by the fires in the Merrimack Valley during and after the disaster.

Aida deployed an emergency response team the Sunday after the gas explosions to the Arlington School, which was designated as the initial emergency response site. Aida worked with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross, and provided families with emotional support and information on where to get more

help. Aida collaborated with the Essex County Community Foundation to coordinate services to help individuals fill out applications for disaster relief checks. Her Family Services team assessed and provided resource and referral information to individuals with other needs, distributed \$100 to \$500 gift cards donated by the Essex County Community Foundation to families. Additionally, the Family Resource Center provided families with basic needs such as food, diapers, formula, clothing, and blankets, and more. It was a true community response.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Christina Minicucci (14th Essex)

Lucy Corchado

Salem

Lucy Corchado is the President of the Point Neighborhood Association, a neighborhood advocacy group working to connect neighbors to one another and improve the quality of life for all residents of The Point Neighborhood in Salem through community engagement, education, and resident involvement. Lucy is very active in the Salem community, serving as a member of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Treasurer for No Place for Hate. Lucy advocated for funds through the Working Cities Challenge to boost economic and job opportunities/training through the Point Vision and Action Plan. She also coordinated a city-wide Relief Drive for Puerto Rico after the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria. She is a Staff Assistant with Salem State University Department of Leadership, Engagement, Advocacy, and Diversity. Lucy also served as Salem City Councilor for Ward 1 from 2003 to 2007.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Joan B. Lovely (Second Essex)

James Cuadrado

Worcester

James is an incredible advocate for our community. Every year, he organizes the New Life Health & Safety Fair that brings together dozens of organizations to connect residents to services and to build community ties. He is the Chairman of the Board of the South Worcester Neighborhood Improvement Center, an organization that provides services vital to the community including food assistance, summer camps, job training and much more. He is making our neighborhood and city a better place to live.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Daniel Donahue (16th Worcester)

Carlos A.F. Da Silva

Hingham

Carlos is an immigrant from Brazil. He was elected to the Hingham School Committee in 2016 and reelected in 2019. In addition to serving as the Vice Chair, he also serves on the Long Range Planning subcommittee and is the school board's Legislative Liaison. Upon his election, Carlos became the first Brazilian-American elected to public office in the United States. He and his wife are raising two beautiful children who attended Hingham Public Schools.

Carlos is a state auditor with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, assigned to the South Shore. He is the Union Steward with NAGE-SEIU. Carlos holds a BA in Union Leadership and Administration from the National Labor College and earned an Associates Degree in Labor Management Relations from Quincy College.

Carlos is a longtime leader in his local community as well as in our region and the larger statewide community. The theme always remains the same - service to people, service to the community. Carlos is a Trustee of the Sons and Daughters of Italy in Hingham, a member of the Advisory Board of MassCare / Single Payer, an Executive Board

Member of the Plymouth County Democratic League, and continues to be an active member of the Hingham Democratic Town Committee. In the past, he has served as an Executive Committee Member of the Greater Boston Labor Council, becoming the first ever Latinx to serve in that capacity, a member of the Quincy Lions Club, and Past President of the Massachusetts Freemasonry - Logia America Lodge in Cambridge. Not one to forget his roots, Carlos has also proudly served as President of the Board of Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, a member of the Board of Brazilian Workers Center in Allston, the Brazilian American Association in Framingham, and the Brazilian Total Assistance in Quincy.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Joan Meschino (3rd Plymouth)

Jose R. Escribano Jr.

Springfield

Jose attended Springfield schools and later graduated from Umass Amherst. While there, he served as an SGA senator and founded the first chapter of a Latino fraternity. Jose was a true campus leader and joined many Latino student organizations as a member to educate his fellow classmates about the beauty of his culture.

After graduating, he began working as a social worker and later became an adoption worker where he dedicated 10 years to that work. He went on to get a Master's Degree in Education and started his own behavioral consulting business where he spent 4 years working with the city to help turn a level 4 school around.

Jose then became an assistant principle and helped take a level 3 school to level 1 status. This was the result of efforts such as getting his school administration to have a larger impact on student learning. Most recently, Jose became a principle two years ago and his success led to a request for his help to turn around the Brightwood School.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Bud Williams (11th Hampden)

Wendy Estrella

Methuen

Wendy is among the most respected attorneys in the Merrimack Valley, dedicated to serving residents with the highest standards of legal services and advice. A graduate of Northern Essex Community College (NECC), Merrimack College and the Massachusetts School of Law, she has served on the boards of the Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence, Lawrence Family Development Charter School, Lawrence Partnership and Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Diana DiZoglio (First Essex)

Marilyn Garcia

Winthrop, Chelsea, Revere and beyond

Marilyn Garcia is a person who goes above and beyond for the people in her community and the communities around her. Marilyn has worked on foreclosure prevention for many years and is always the first one to pitch in when asked for assistance without hesitation. She deeply cares about and has worked tremendously hard for victims of predatory lending. Predatory Lending has mostly affected minorities and low income people from inner cities. Marilyn works with constituents from many different communities but especially Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop. Marilyn has worked on foreclosure prevention services to our most vulnerable populations. Marilyn works to keep constituents in their home with recodification of existing loans. She has also pitched in to help fire victims in Revere who were burned out of their home and could not afford their mortgage on top of rent due to disaster. She treats people with the utmost compassion and empathy.

Nominating Legislator

Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (19th Suffolk)

Magdalena Gomez

Springfield

Magdalena Gómez was a vanguard member of the Nuyorican Literary Movement and began performing her poetry at age 17. By age 24 she was named “Our American Oracle” by Michael Devlin, editor of the original Poet’s Magazine, and has been a creative keynote speaker since the 1980’s. Ms. Gómez was recently inducted as the 2019-2021 Poet Laureate of Springfield, Massachusetts. Her poems, lyrics and monologues have been set to music and performed Off-Broadway in New York City; Los Angeles; Montreal; Paris; Wisconsin’s Union Theater; Pittsburgh’s Kelly-Strayhorn Theater; and Gala Theater in Washington, D.C. among other venues. One of her poetry collections, *Shameless Woman*, (Red Sugarcane Press, NYC) is included in academic syllabi throughout the U.S.

This year, she was also the recipient of the Latinas 50 Plus Literature Award, presented at Fordham University and the Springfield Cultural Council’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. In 2018, she received an Arts and Humanities Award from New England Public Radio. Her most recent play, *ERASED: a poetic imagining on the life of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg* is the first play ever written on Schomburg. Her play celebrates the Afro-Puerto Rican bibliophile, archivist and activist who saved over 30,000 documents and books on Pan African history that would have otherwise been dismissed and discarded.

Ms. Gómez has been widely published and anthologized, in publications that include *The Massachusetts Review*; *The Progressive*; *Ollantay Theater Journal*; and the *L.A. Times*, among many others. Ms.

Gómez has been a youth centered cultural worker for over four decades, with a focus on honoring multiple literacies; social justice; and the dismantling of all forms of violence through intergenerational artistic and literary collaborations. In 2007, with the support of the Latino Breakfast Club, Ms. Gómez co-founded the first Latinx theater in the history of Springfield. Now based as Theater in Residence at the Bing Arts Center, working in collaboration with Amherst Media and Springfield’s Art for the Soul Gallery, Ms. Gómez volunteers alongside

Teatro V!da's Ign!te the M!c Youth Collective, developing confident youth leaders of character and integrity, infusing a love of learning, and providing venue for the voices and talents of youth in Springfield and throughout the region, with a reach from Boston to Amherst.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Carlos Gonzalez (10th Hampden)

Stacey Irizarry

Winchester

Stacey has worked tirelessly to improve the Winchester community, typified by her work in the Winchester Inclusive Network (WIN), the Winchester Multicultural Network, her co-chairing the Winchester Special Education Parent Advisory Council (WINPAC) and her leadership of Winchester's effort to raise money for hurricane relief for Puerto Rico.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Michael Day (31st Middlesex)

Doris Reina Landaverde

Ayer

Doris is a spokesperson for Massachusetts + National Temporary Protected Status TPS coalition. She travels to Washington DC and across the country to advocate for TPS protections by congress. Along the way she speaks about her experience as a TPS recipient since leaving El Salvador.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Jamie Eldridge (Middlesex & Worcester)

Nathalie Lora

Lawrence

Ms. Lora is a young Latina working at ACT Lawrence, a Latina led nonprofit in the city of Lawrence for the past 5 years, where she helps families and individuals obtain financial stability through different programs and services. Ms. Lora also works with more than 30 youth every summer, providing training and real life experiences where they learn soft skills to become employable.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Frank Moran (17th Essex)

Waleska Lugo-DeJesus

Springfield and the Pioneer Valley

Waleska is the CEO of Inclusive Strategies and the Director of the Healing Racism Institute. She is widely recognized for her advocacy for racial and social justice work in identifying educational strategies to create equity. She has over twenty years of experience and is widely respected and recognized for her innovative ability to broaden coalitions and build communities of inclusion. She focuses on enhancing the development of personal and institutional goals for addressing systemic racism.

She serves as Commissioner to the MA Art & Cultural Council representing Springfield as the Vice-President and volunteers at Springfield Public Schools “Race Matters” Task Force. In 2008, Gov. Patrick appointed her as a Commissioner for Commonwealth Corps, promoting civic engagement throughout the State. She served as Co-Chair for the Western Mass United for Puerto Rico Coalition helping displaced families during the Humanitarian Crisis after Hurricane Maria. Waleska serves as an advisor to the Puerto Rican Parade and a founding member of MA Women of Color Coalition, intergenerational advocacy group. She served as a board member for Partners for a Healthier

Community, addressing health disparities within the African American and Latino communities.

She has received numerous professional and civic awards including 2019 statewide “Service Hero Award” by Project 351 for helping build a just, inclusive and united global community, 2018 Massachusetts Public Health Association “Community Leadership Award”, 2018 Puerto Rico Hurricane Relief Warrior Awarded by Mayor Cruz of San Juan, Puerto Rico, State of Connecticut 100 Women of Color Award in 2018, 2017 Ruth M. Batson Advocate of the Year Award which is the Providers’ Council’s in Boston pinnacle award for excellence in advocacy, 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Social Justice Award for Excellence in addressing Race Relations and 2016 Outstanding Champion of Diversity during National Philanthropy Day from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Eric P. Lesser (First Hampden and Hampshire)

Celina Miranda

Jamaica Plain

Celina Miranda is the executive director of Hyde Square Task Force. Miranda has spent her career engaged in work that enables underserved communities to access the resources and opportunities they need for a better future. With more than a decade of experience in philanthropy, she has helped numerous Boston nonprofits secure funding in the service of their mission.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Nika Elugardo (15th Suffolk)

Jason Q. Molina

Shrewsbury

Jason Molina has passionately invested his time and energy into strengthening our community. Through his work as a Town Meeting Member, an environmental activist, an active volunteer for Cub Scout Pack 114, and his role as the ballot committee campaign manager for the successful passage of a debt exclusion to build a much-needed new elementary school, Jason's impact in our community is visible and tangible. Jason does not hesitate to use his skills, experience, voice and time to better our community and ensure that Shrewsbury remains a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family, just as he and his wife Guinevere are doing with their three young sons. One of Jason's most admirable traits is his commitment to lead on even when some efforts falter, recognizing the value of persistence and hard-work, and the example this sets for his children and others. While active locally in support of the defeated 2014 ballot question on expanding the bottle bill, Jason turned his activism for our environment to co-leading a successful local effort to ban the use of single-use plastic bags. As a dedicated community member, Jason has donated his time and talent to supporting civic efforts, public service, community engagement and voter education, and Shrewsbury has benefitted enormously from all of his endeavors.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Hannah Kane (11th Worcester)

Ivette Olemeda

Worcester

Ivette Olemeda currently serves as Worcester's Transformative Development Initiative fellow, a position created by MassDevelopment. Having emigrated from Puerto Rico in 1985, Ivette has a passion for learning that makes such demands not only welcome but also mandatory. After working her way up from her first position as a young mother in a new country as a part-time teller at a local bank, Ms. Olemeda most recently worked at the Center for Women & Enterprise helping teach women economic self-sufficiency skills. She left the position in 2014 to pursue an accelerated dual degree program at

October 3, 2019 - 20

Clark University, earning an MBA and a master's degree in community planning and development. Ivette has been active in community organizing, especially educating members of the community about the importance of voting and neighborhood development. Ivette is also a small business owner, focused on developing sustainable products to create a better environment and future for our neighborhoods.

Nominating Legislator

Representative David H.A. LeBoeuf (17th Worcester)

Jose Palma

Lynn

Jose A. Palma is an immigrant from El Salvador. He has lived in the U.S. since 1998 and has always participated in activities to support and protect the immigrant community. But it was in 2009 when he decided to make this issue one of his priorities in life. In 2010, he led a group that was advocating for the Dream Act. Though they were not able to pass the legislation, they achieved the DACA program that helped thousands of young people. In 2011, he graduated with a Paralegal Associate's Degree from NSCC and went to work as a Paralegal in a nonprofit organization helping the immigrant community and leading state wide campaigns in favor of the community. The campaign most important to him, however, is the campaign he is leading right now. In 2017 the Trump administration decided to cancel many immigrants' Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Many countries, including his country of El Salvador, were impacted by this decision. This decision came despite the fact that many of the immigrants in question have had TPS for the last 18 years and have built roots in the communities where they live. As a TPS recipient, Jose is proud to have testified before Congress to advocate for permanent residency and to have traveled across the country building a national network and a campaign that he hopes will be strong enough to persuade elected officials that TPS recipients should be provided the opportunity to continue living in this country.

In the last 2 years Jose's campaign has accomplished many good things. It has built an organization and has helped build a National

Network that is focusing specifically on TPS, with its main focus to achieve permanent residency for everyone protected by TPS. Despite the Trump administration's intention of taking TPS protections away, Jose is using his legislative campaign and the court system to make sure the TPS community is still protected. And the campaign is just getting stronger. Most importantly, this campaign is bringing together community leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, elected officials and many other people to work together to look for a solution to this problem the TPS community is facing at this moment.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Brendan Crighton (Third Essex)

Rosa Pantoja

Holyoke

Rosa Pantoja is an artist, a musician, and multiple small business owner in Holyoke: Plush Beauty Salon, Luna Tax Service, and Luna Lunatics Design. She embodies the Latina story in Holyoke as a young mother who took advantage of all the opportunities around her and built herself up to be a strong independent leader in the community. She serves on a number of boards including being the President of the CDC Nueva Esperanza.

Rosa is mother to her own children, including her daughter who is serving in the Air Force, and mother figure to so many in Holyoke. She gives back to her community and uses her experience to empower other women to become strong and independent as well. Rosa and her family are pillars in Holyoke with a work-hard, give-back and enjoy-life spirit.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Aaron Vega (5th Hampden)

Nivia Pina

Dorchester

As the owner of Merengue Restaurante in Dorchester and other businesses across Boston, Nivia contributes to the community through authentic Dominican cuisine and culture.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Liz Miranda (5th Suffolk)

Renata Piva

Hyannis

Renata Piva owns and operates Wax by Renata Beauty Boutique located in the heart of Osterville village. Renata emigrated from Brazil in April of 2004. In 2013, she attended aesthetics school and then began adventuring on her own when she opened Wax by Renata in 2015. Today, her day spa employs eight people and offers a wide array of services including facials, massages, lash extensions, and waxing. Through her hard work and vision, Renata has created a successful business that has added to the diversity of the Cape Cod business community.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Will Crocker (2nd Barnstable)

Raquel Quezada

Haverhill

Raquel Quezada is a mother of 4 children and founder of Changing the World of Special Needs. She has experience in communications, radio, and TV and utilizes those skills to communicate special needs resources to parents and community members through her radio program. All the knowledge she received as a mother of a disabled child and the education she earned on different types of disabilities are what motivated her to

have her own radio show to best support parents in similar situations. Today, parents and families consult with Raquel for advocacy and support for their children.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Andy X. Vargas (3rd Essex)

Francine Rodriguez

Amherst & Belchertown

As Program Manager for CHD’s Family Outreach of Amherst, Francine is an integral part of the Amherst area’s support system for families in all kinds of need, and especially our immigrant neighbors, in the community, the school system, and in social service organizations. For the past 14 years she has assisted hundreds – if not thousands - of Amherst residents, sometimes with finding key household items, navigating housing court, supporting their family’s strengths and skills to devise and implement their own strategies and solutions to thrive. Her goal is to help mitigate “corrosive effects that block their survival” which can include generational poverty, mental health diagnoses, addiction, language barriers or trauma, or, some combination of all of those.” Through her work, Francine strengthens our community and empowers residents. She’s highly effective, humble, and a gift to our community.

Nominating Legislators

Representative Mindy Domb (3rd Hampshire)
Representative Susannah Whipps (2nd Franklin)

Noemy Rodriguez

East Boston

Noemy is an organizer with GreenRoots, a local environmental justice organization, and the Boston Education Justice Alliance. She also volunteers with City Life/Vida Urbana, a housing justice organization, and MassCosh to advocate for workers’ rights. She is a staunch advocate for women and victims of domestic violence. At an event at the Salvadoran Consulate in East Boston, she asked the General Consul what the Salvadoran government is doing to prevent deforestation

October 3, 2019 - 24

caused by foreign industry, especially the kind they hope to attract. Through her work, she uses trust to civically engage working-class, Spanish-speaking residents in processes where they have been historically underrepresented. She has also overcome great adversity and uses her experiences to advocate for others who find themselves in similar circumstances.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Adrian Madaro (1st Suffolk)

Maridena Rojas

Boston

Maridena is a leader in Boston on issues of justice affecting urban neighborhoods. Over the past 5 years as The Boston Project Ministries' Community Engagement Manager, she has brought attention to all voices in the community - especially those who are marginalized. Maridena has twenty years of experience working directly with residents impacted by HIV/AIDS, Reproductive Health and Domestic Violence. She is a mentor for resident leaders, a listening ear, and a collaborator bringing together residents, civic groups, and institutions for the community's benefit. She has a vision for equipping and empowering neighborhood leaders, and she is tenacious in her desire to fight for what communities need and deserve. She lives in and serves in her own neighborhood, the Talbot-Norfolk Triangle in Dorchester.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Nick Collins (First Suffolk)

Elizabeth Roman

Springfield

Elizabeth Román is a reporter for The Republican and Masslive.com and editor of El Pueblo Latino, a weekly Spanish-language publication. Born and raised in Springfield to Puerto Rican parents, she is one of two

bilingual reporters for the newspaper and her work focuses on highlighting the accomplishments as well as the socioeconomic challenges faced by the Latino community in Western Massachusetts. She has covered everything from municipal elections to education and crime, but her strength is in human interest pieces. She also writes a weekly column reviewing the best ice cream in the region and is an avid fan of the Big E, one year even spending the entire 17 days living at and reporting from the fairgrounds.

Elizabeth is a graduate of Holyoke Community College and the University of Massachusetts and has been a reporter at The Republican for nearly 15 years. In her free time she is an advocate for early childhood literacy and is a volunteer for Link to Libraries where she goes to two local elementary schools every month and reads to fourth grade students. The program provides each child with free books to take home and start their own library.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Carlos Gonzalez (10th Hampden)

Nelson Salazar Somerville

Originally from El Salvador, Nelson left for the USA in 1980 when his country was about to experience one of the worst civil wars in Central America. Like many immigrants, he started working as a dishwasher in the Boston Area. He loves cooking and decided to go to school to get his associate degree in Culinary Arts from Bunker Hill Community College. After working for many years in local restaurants and hotels, even though he loved cooking, he decided that his mission was not in the food industry; his mission in life was to help others. He applied to UMass Boston to pursue a bachelor's degree in Psychology. While studying at the university, he found out about the College of Public and Community Services (CPCS), a non-traditional program designed for adults who want to back to school (Mayor Tom Menino and Joe Kennedy graduated from this college). He immediately transferred to this college and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services and Community Planning. While at UMass he applied and was accepted to participate in

the Latino Leadership Opportunity Program (LLOP). The LLOP is an academic enrichment program and leadership development offered by the Gaston Institute.

In the interim, he started engaging in community activities, volunteering and working in local non-profits organizations. He worked at Centro Presente, Cambridge Human Services Department, Concilio Hispano de Cambridge, The Welcome Project, and Somerville Center for Adults Learning Experiences (SCALE). He is presently working as the Enrollment Coordinator at the Riverside Early Head Start program.

Working as the Executive Director at The Welcome Project in Somerville, he collaborated with many professors from Tufts University. He strongly believes that college students must have a chance to put into practice the theories they are learning. It was through these collaborations that Nelson learned about Neighborhood Fellowship Program at the Urban Environmental Policy Planning Department at Tufts University. He applied and was accepted in 2006 and then graduated in 2008 with a Master of Public Policy (MPP) His concentration was Housing and Education Policy.

While working in Centro Presente, Nelson coordinated the first Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Salvadorans. Centro Presente was recognized as the third non-profit registering the most Salvadorans in the program. AHORA a Latino youth program at Concilio Hispano de Cambridge was recognized by President Bill Clinton as one of the Latino youth programs that worked in the United States. Nelson was the coordinator of the program.

Working at the Welcome Project, in 2004 he was recognized by the Community Change Inc. with the Drylongso Award. "Established in 1989, the Drylongso Award honors ordinary people doing extraordinary anti-racism work in Greater Boston."

Nelson has lived in Somerville for almost 40 years. Since he moved to the city, he has actively engaged in the community. A newly elected official said once "as soon as I made the decision to run for office I was

told, in order for you to have a better understanding of the needs of immigrants in Somerville, you must meet with Nelson Salazar”

Nominating Legislators

Rep. Mike Connolly (26th Middlesex)
Rep. Denise Provost (27th Middlesex)
Rep. Christine Barber (34th Middlesex)
Sen. Pat Jehlen (Second Middlesex)

Rose Mary Sargent

Lynn

Rose Mary Sargent has a long record of working tirelessly to promote diversity and strengthen the Latino community in Lynn by registering people to vote, promoting voter education, and canvassing during elections. She has also been a strong advocate for the Lynn community through her constituent service work in former Representative John Tierney’s office, where she helped resolve immigration issues.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Peter Capano (11th Essex)

Stephanie Sibley

Malden

Stephanie Sibley is a career educator and currently works as a House Principal at Malden High School. She focuses on empowering students by working with them on how to advocate for themselves, and she works with staff to ensure quality instruction. She is a role model to staff and students alike, and MHS says that they feel lucky to have her.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Jason Lewis (Fifth Middlesex)

Carrie Camillo Tankard

Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard

Carrie Camillo Tankard has been a significant contributor to civic and cultural life on Martha's Vineyard for almost forty years. She has served as vice-president of the Martha's Vineyard branch of the NAACP for thirty-eight years. At the NAACP she has been focused on memberships, youth and chairing the group's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday dinner. Carrie co-founded the African American Heritage Trail on Martha's Vineyard. She has been an active member of the Martha's Vineyard preservation trust, served for five years on the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters and served for two years on the board of the Martha's Vineyard Hospice. She is the former president of a Parent Teacher's Association and she has been a volunteer English tutor for Portuguese immigrants to the island.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Dylan Fernandes (Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket)

Francisco Torres

Fitchburg

Francisco is a Transformative Development Initiative Fellow, brought on as part of MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative to advance local redevelopment visions across Massachusetts. He previously served as the Town of Brookline's economic development and long-term planner and lead economic development professional in the Town of Westborough, where he helped increase business attraction and retention, improve workforce development, and revitalize the downtown neighborhood.

A Los Angeles native and Boston transplant, Torres has a bachelor's degree in social ecology from the University of California, Irvine, and a master's degree in urban and regional policy from Northeastern University. With his deep understanding of the arts and culture and a commitment to economic development, Francisco is helping to establish

Fitchburg's downtown as a regional hub of arts and culture and create a regional destination that changes perceptions and celebrates Fitchburg's diversity.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Stephan Hay (3rd Worcester)

Carolina Trujillo

Lynn

Carolina Trujillo is Director of La Voz Newspaper, a weekly publication serving the Latino community in the City of Lynn. Carolina also volunteers her time at various non-profits and local boards, including, the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), the North Shore Latino Business Association, Latino Scholarship Fund, YMCA of Metro North, Beyond Walls, Impact Lynn, Lynn TDI Partnership, Celebrate Literacy, Stop the Violence Lynn, and the Lynn Business Partnership.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Dan Cahill (10th Essex)

Lawrence City Council President

Kendrys Vasquez

Lawrence

Kendrys Vasquez was named one of the Latino 30 Under 30 by El Mundo Boston. At age 23, he was the youngest Dominican American to be elected to the Lawrence city council. Before that, Kendrys has been involved in community organizing since moving to Lawrence from the Dominican Republic at age 13. At the time, he barely spoke English, but he was organizing food drives for the elderly and painting over graffiti with friends. At 17, Kendrys was a field organizer for Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. Kendrys has been a leader in the community of Lawrence since he moved there. Kendrys has also been named a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Young Leader of Today, a Joven Dominicano

Destacado en el Exterior and a Dominican List Inductee by the DANR.
He is deeply deserving of this recognition for his public service.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Barry R. Finegold (Second Essex & Middlesex)

Eleanore Velez

Lee

Eleanore Velez, an admissions counselor and coordinator of the Multicultural Center at Berkshire Community College (BCC), is passionate about education.

Velez, who has worked at BCC since the fall of 2007, was born and grew up in Mexico City, Mexico. As a girl, she spent thirteen summers at Chimney Corners Camp, a YMCA camp in the Berkshires. She later became a counselor and then the Youth Travel Programs director.

She later worked for the YMCA in New York City and eventually returned to the Berkshires and volunteered as the chairwoman for the Latin American Council where she helped Latinos, a population that grew more than 25 percent in the early 2000s, relocate to the area.

Velez has always seen herself as a “natural advocate.” “I believe that through education we can reach our full potential not only by improving our own personal circumstances, but because we can understand others better and collectively work towards the common good. I have been blessed to work along those who are pursuing that goal, said Velez.

At BCC, she has assumed a leadership role in fostering a welcoming and engaging campus for students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds so that they are able to thrive and achieve their full potential. She also serves as a liaison and advocate with community agencies and various college offices to enhance the dialogue that leads to deeper community integration.

BCC student Juan Jose Carrion-Almeida remembers meeting Velez during his first visit to BCC. “I’m an immigrant and the only thing I had at that time were dreams. Eleanore explained all the requirements to enroll at BCC, which were difficult because of the paperwork involved as well as the expense. I thought it was going to be impossible. Eleanore then talked about the benefits. She explained how important it is to have a degree in America and where could higher education lead me. She lit a spark inside - and turned it into a fire,” he said.

Carrion-Almeida would visit her office many other times. Five years after their first meeting, in the fall of 2013, he enrolled at BCC. “She would always remind me about taking the train to success by enrolling in college.” “The first thing I did after enrolling for classes was go to Eleanore’s office to give her a big hug and thank her for her persistence. I see her now as a friend, but most importantly as a role model,” said Carrion-Almeida.

Velez has garnered numerous awards for the inspiration and guidance she has provided to hundreds of people in the Berkshires. Her accolades include the Berkshire Immigrant Center’s Jane Addams Spirit Award and the Multicultural Competence Award from Multicultural Bridge, a Berkshire County based organization that promotes mutual understanding and acceptance among diverse groups by serving as a resource to both local institutions and the community at large.

In the fall of 2014, she was honored at the Literacy Network of South Berkshire (LitNet) annual gala with the organization’s sixth annual Founders of America Award, which pays tribute to immigrants who have made important contributions to American society in general, and to life in the Berkshires in particular.

Velez holds an associate’s degree from BCC and a bachelor’s degree from Mount Holyoke College.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Adam G. Hinds (Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin & Hampden)

Adrian Ventura

New Bedford

Mr. Ventura is the Executive Director of Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores, the leading immigrant worker and support center in the region. CCT provides workplace education, “Know Your Rights” training, provides legal and community support for rights violations, and organizes public outreach to empower and provide dignity to immigrant workers. Mr. Ventura fled Guatemala when he was ten years old after being tortured during the country’s civil war. He was inspired to speak out for immigrant worker rights after the Michael Bianco factory raid in New Bedford. He has been a leader in the Guatemalan Mayan community and the Greater New Bedford immigrant community for decades.

Nominating Legislator

Representative Christopher Hendricks (11th Bristol)

Francia Wisniewski

Montague

Francia Wisniewski currently serves as a commissioner of the Hampshire/Franklin Commission on the Status of Women and is a member of the Montague Democratic Committee. She also serves on the boards of the Shea Theater and Leadership Pioneer Valley. Before moving to Montague, she served two terms on the Greenfield School Committee. She is a graduate of the Emerge Massachusetts program. A 15-year resident of Franklin County, Francia has been an advocate for children and residents in need. As Senior Program Manager at Raising a Reader Massachusetts, she supports preparing children for school success through early reading and parental education. She holds a Master’s in Education from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Nominating Legislator

Senator Joanne M. Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin & Worcester)
Representative Natalie M. Blias (1st Franklin)

Julissa Ortiz and Margie Ann Rosario

Framingham

Margie Ann Rosario and Julissa Ortiz are cofounders of “Discovering Hidden Gems,” a nonprofit that helps increase the quality of life of at-risk youth through recreational and educational experiences. Rosario and Ortiz both grew up in Framingham and understand the intricacies, needs, and strengths of the community. Through their work, they promote the mantra #EveryChildDeservesToShine.

Nominating Legislators

Representative Maria Robinson (6th Middlesex)

Representative Jack Lewis (7th Middlesex)

Acknowledgements

October 3, 2019 - 34

*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*

*Senate President Karen E. Spilka
Massachusetts Senate*

*House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo
Massachusetts House of Representatives*

*Secretary Rosalin Acosta
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Secretary*

*Magdalena Gomez
Author & Poet*

Ernest Taylor

John Steies

Isabel Torres

Aaron Soroa-Alvarez

Isabel Vargas

Emrah Fejzic

Ernesto ReyesHernandez

Maia Raynor

Devin Edwards