

MARIA'S LIST

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DEMOCRACY & EDUCATION

2016 MA State Results Summary

Natalie Higgins, Leominster, State Representative

Barbara L'Italien, Andover/Lawrence/Dracut/Tewksbury, State Senate

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Natalie Higgins

After a 38-vote primary victory over a long-time city councilor, **Natalie**, a third-generation Leominster resident, is running for the open Leominster state representative seat against a Republican State Committeeman in November. Many credit **Natalie's** close primary win to her campaign's sophisticated and disciplined ground game, which her campaign continues to build on for the November election.

Natalie's dad has a 9th grade education and worked his way up from mechanic to owner of the family auto-part store. Her mom worked various jobs, including as a school lunch lady and at the local plastic factory, before she had to leave to take care of Natalie's grandparents, who both died of cancer. Paid family leave, and the impact it can have on a family when it isn't available, is very personal to her.

"For my family, our experience was that government is not where you go for help, it's where they close the door."

Starting in college, **Natalie** became a dogged advocate for victims of sexual and domestic violence, from serving as a teen counselor at a rape crisis center to Legal Fellow with the Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence. And, in running for state representative, she hopes to bring that same commitment to women's rights to her work as a legislator, from championing comprehensive healthcare to the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination and violence.

A graduate of UMass Amherst, **Natalie** currently works as the founding Executive Director of PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts) where she works to fight the privatization of public higher education. On the Question 2 ballot initiative, she says, "we're not against charters, we just don't want to lift the cap." Already, Leominster is losing \$800,000 a year to charters and doesn't have a charter school in the city. "This is the line in the sand," she explains. "Are we going to keep defending the public school system or are we going to let it go?"

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Barbara L'Italien

Barbara L'Italien is the sitting state senator for Andover, Lawrence, Dracut and Tewksbury. Before being elected to the senate in 2015, she was the state representative for Andover, Boxford, and Tewksbury for eight years before losing to a Republican in the Massachusetts House. **Barbara** served on the Andover School Committee for two years before then successfully running for state senate. **Barbara's** state senate seat leans Republican and Governor Charlie

Baker has targeted it this November as on the Republican's top two senate seats to flip.

A legislative champion for people with disabilities and a leader on eldercare issues, Asperger's and her mother with Alzheimer's who has lived with her family for 20 years. As a state representative, **Barbara** authored the bill that is now law, requiring Massachusetts insurance companies to cover autism care, making Massachusetts the first state in the country to do so. In the senate, **Barbara** successfully pushed to expand access to home healthcare aides for the elderly, so that more seniors could afford to age with dignity with their families in their communities.

A dogged champion of public schools over her entire career, **Barbara** led the fight against the State Senate's controversial charter school bill this year that would gradually lift the cap but tie in to an increase in funding for public schools. "The funding lost to chartered schools can hollow out a community," Barbara says of her opposition to the bill. Her campaign is working in tandem with the No on 2 ballot initiative campaign, sharing resources and canvassing together. "Charter schools only educate 4% of students in the state. We need to make it better for 100% of our students."

[Gerly Adrien, Everett, State Representative](#)

[Andrea Harrington, W. Mass, State Senate](#)

[Monica Cannon, Roxbury & Fenway, State Representative](#)

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Gerly Adrien

The daughter of Haitian immigrants, **Gerly Adrien** grew up in Everett, where she is running for state representative against the sitting Republican Joe McGonagle. **Gerly** describes feeling, early in her childhood, that her parents never truly felt that they were accepted or belonged in America. And despite Everett recently being named the most diverse city in Massachusetts by the *Boston Business Journal*, it has never elected a person of color to represent the city at any level. Gerly would be the first.

Concerned that low-income, immigrant families are being pushed out of Everett because of rising rents, **Gerly** is running to ensure Everett stays affordable and wants to work to increase home ownership opportunities in the city. Benefiting herself from programs like Teen Empowerment growing up, **Gerly's** other key priority is fighting for more youth and after-school programming in Everett, where options are limited.

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Andrea Harrington

Andrea is running for the open Western Massachusetts state senate seat representing over 50 cities and towns in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. She is the only woman in the race.

Growing up the daughter of a carpenter and housekeeper in Western Massachusetts, **Andrea** remembers, in the third grade, cleaning houses with her teen mom because they couldn't afford childcare. She was the first in her family to go to college, and the first to go to law school. She spent her years right after law school fighting death penalty convictions in Florida and came back to Western Massachusetts to start a family and worked to defend poor defendants in the criminal justice system.

Rooted in her own experiences as a daughter of working-class parents, as a mom, and as a lawyer helping clients navigate a broken criminal justice system, **Andrea** champions progressive policies around criminal justice reform like ending mandatory minimum sentencing and policies supporting working class families like the Fight the 15 and state-funded childcare.

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Monica Cannon

A shooting at her doorstep in Roxbury and "watching someone try to murder [her] son on two separate occasions" spurred **Monica** to organize peace walks in her community and organize her neighbors to push for increased security measures at her public housing complex. Because of those efforts, shootings in the neighborhood dropped 80% in one

year.

An organizer at heart who currently works at the community organization ROCA with at-risk young men in low-income neighborhoods, **Monica** emphasizes the need to "realize that public safety is directly connected to the housing issue and it's directly connected to everything happening in the district."

As a candidate for the open state representative seat representing Roxbury and parts of Fenway in Boston, **Monica's** focus is on safer streets for her community, through engaging nonprofits already doing the work and pro-actively working to improve relationships between police and residents. She also champions the need to create more affordable housing and develop more career training programs for the residents in Roxbury and Fenway.

Monica has been endorsed by eight major unions, including the SEIU State Council, the Massachusetts Teachers Associations and the Massachusetts AFL_CIO; by major progressive organizations like Mass Alliance; and by community leaders like Sheriff Steve Tompkins, Reverend Liz Walker and Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson.