

# MARIA'S LIST

Maria Jobin-Leeds  
DEMOCRACY & EDUCATION

## 2017 MA Municipal Summary

*We're onto something! All Maria's List endorsed candidates made it through the municipal preliminary elections to November, and Yvonne Spicer, Ayanna Pressley, Lydia Edwards and Kim Janey were then ELECTED in historic wins in Framingham and Boston.*

*Mayor Yvonne Spicer is the first Mayor of Framingham. Boston City Councilor At-Large Ayanna Pressley, who was the first Woman of Color on the Council, was re-elected resoundingly and is joined by two newly-elected Women of Color powerhouses who ran grassroots-powered campaigns. In a diverse district that spans East Boston, the North End and Charlestown, Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards, an immigrant rights advocate who led the passage of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, is the first person of color to hold the seat. Boston City Councilor Kim Janey is an education advocate who, as a child in the Boston Public Schools, was bused from her Roxbury community to Charlestown. She is the first woman to represent the district. With the election of Councilor Edwards and Councilor Janey, the Boston City Council now has a historic high of SIX women (out of 13 members) serving.*

[Dr. Yvonne Spicer, Framingham, Mayor \(Elected\)](#)

[Ayanna Pressley, Boston, Councilor At-Large \(Elected\)](#)

[Lydia Edwards, Boston, City Council - District 1 \(Elected\)](#)

[Kim Janey, Boston, City Council - District 7 \(Elected\)](#)

[Nicole Castillo, Newton, City Council –](#)

[Ward 1 At-Large](#)

[Stephanie Martins, Everett, City Council - Ward 2](#)

[Jynai McDonald, Springfield, City Council At-Large](#)

[Dimple Rana, Revere, City Council At-Large](#)

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**Dr. Yvonne Spicer**

**Framingham**

**Mayor**

*Preliminary Election - September 26th*

In 1985, **Yvonne** moved to Framingham from Brooklyn, New York for her first job out of college: to be a teacher at Farley Middle School. She "never left," she says, She worked in both the Framingham Public Schools and the Newton Public Schools as a teacher and administrator, and now serves as the Vice President of the Museum of Science, where she started and leads a division that focuses on building STEM education partnerships among school districts and business leaders, policymakers and nonprofits across the country.

**Yvonne** holds four degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Arts, a Master of Science in Technology Education, a Doctorate of Education from UMass Boston and an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

**Yvonne** serves in local Framingham government, as a Town Meeting member and on the Standing Committee on Ways and Means.

**Key Priorities/Issues:**

1. Economic Development - "There hasn't been a lot of growth of new businesses, in terms of the innovation economy: green technologies and jobs that are looking forward that are not impacting our carbon footprint, for instance. We have to look at micro-businesses and think about ways we're building partnerships with businesses to employ our citizens. When people can invest in the community by buying homes, by living and working there, it makes for a more comprehensive economy," **Yvonne** says.
2. Maintaining and Preserving Our Open Spaces - "It's important that we become very good stewards of the spaces we've been given because once we give up green spaces, we can't get them back. We have to also make sure they are safe places for families to go and enjoy."
3. Education - "Framingham has a great school system and I want to work to keep that path and momentum, and make sure that there are opportunities for all children to excel and succeed in school," **Yvonne** says.
4. Community Safety and Health - "We have to look to national and international best practices as well as look to local expertise to make Framingham the safest community it can be and to address health crises, like the opioid epidemic that has touched all of us in some way."

**Seat Status:** In April, residents voted to change Framingham from a town to a city form of government and so will be electing the first mayor of Framingham. Seven people are running for mayor, including former State Representative John Stefanini. **Yvonne** is considered to be a top-tier contender to become Mayor. The September 26th preliminary election will narrow the field down to two.

**Dynamics of Race:** The race took a nasty turn in May when mayoral candidate and former Representative John Stefanini apologized for removing Yvonne Spicer campaign materials and placing them behind a trash barrel in the Framingham Public Library. The incident was caught on library surveillance video and reported by the local press. [View video](#)

**Analysis of Race/Spicer Campaign:** **Yvonne** has a strong campaign structure, with a strategist, campaign manager and field director, all with prior campaign experience, on board. Her team has a strong field plan and sense of the numbers needed to win. Because of the historic nature of electing Framingham's first mayor, **Yvonne's** campaign expects a high turnout. The possibility of a progressive black woman as Framingham's first mayor has already energized Framingham progressives, and the campaign expects that to translate into votes on election day.

[Candidates](#)

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**Ayanna Pressley**

**Boston**

**Re-election City Councilor At-large**

***General Election- November***

EMILY's List honored **Ayanna** with its 2015 Gabrielle Giffords Rising Star Award. The New Republic's Rebecca Traister said, "I was completely transfixed by her. The other people at my table were all saying, 'Holy crap.' It was like listening to Obama in 2004 - she was so clearly the real deal." Traister tweeted that night from the event: "I have seen the politics' future and it is **Ayanna Pressley**."

Raised by a single mother, **Ayanna** often talks about her mother as her inspiration. "I like to say [my mother] gave me roots, my wings and my voice," **Ayanna** says. "My mother was never cynical about the role that government, compassionate government, could play in our lives. On Election Day, from a very young age, I felt powerful." In 2011, her mother, Sandra Pressley, passed away from leukemia more than a year after her daughter became the first woman of color elected to the Boston City Council in its 106-year history.

Going against conventional political wisdom, **Ayanna** ran and won in 2009 and 2013 on a platform of "saving our girls" because, she says, "I believe broken girls grow up to be broken women. I know intimately the challenges of single parenthood, I'm a survivor of a near decade of childhood sexual assault. I didn't just run on my resume." (She was a senior aide to Congressman Joe Kennedy and political director for US Senator John Kerry.) "I told the totality of my journey. That resonated."

#### **Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Girls and Women - **Ayanna** created and chairs the Committee on Healthy Women, Families and Communities. She spearheaded the passage of the Boston Public Schools' first-ever sexual education and condom availability policy.
2. Safe and Healthy Communities - **Ayanna** held a first-of-its-kind hearing called Family Voices, in which families of homicide victims were given center stage to testify. She then worked collaboratively to implement several of the families' recommendations, including expanded trauma supports at Boston Public Schools and creation of monthly provider meetings to improve coordinated care for victims' families.
3. Economic Equity - **Ayanna** successfully advanced a bill to reform the state's liquor licensing laws for Boston, retuning control of the Licensing Board to the City for the first time in 100 years and securing 75 new licenses for the City.
4. Arts and Culture - Working with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, **Ayanna** helped establish designated Cultural Districts and a Literacy Cultural District, the first in the country. She has also fought to sustain and expand arts programming in the Boston Public Schools.

**Seat Status:** Eight people are running in the November election for four at-large seats. Will all four incumbents running, there are no open seats.

**Analysis of race:** **Ayanna** topped the ticket in her last election and it's important for her to do so again to show strength.

[Candidates](#)

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**Lydia Edwards**

**Boston**

**City Councilor, District 1**

***Preliminary Election - September 26th***

**Lydia's** mother, a 23-year veteran of the US Air Force, raised **Lydia** and her twin sister on her own. After her mother left the military, their family struggled to make ends meet; her mother had two jobs making \$5.15/hour and both **Lydia** and her sister had to work as well.

**Lydia** has a law degree from American University and a post-graduate law degree in taxation from Boston University. She became a public interest attorney after volunteering at the Brazilian Worker Center in Allston. "My first day there, there was a line out the door...I started that day in the kitchen with two cardboard boxes." She went on to run the nation's first domestic workers' clinic there. "I say the pain and sometimes shame in people's eyes when they said, 'Yes I am undocumented but I did work and I should get paid.' I saw things I didn't even know happened anymore: people fired because they were pregnant, or people who were injured on the job and too scared to say anything."

Now fluent in Portuguese and Spanish, she went on to a fellowship at Greater Boston Legal Services, where she successfully led a diverse coalition of advocates in the effort to pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, which put labor protections in place for house-cleaners, nannies and other in-home caretakers. The ground-breaking law passed in one legislative session and went into effect in April 2015, making Massachusetts only the 4th state in the country to pass this kind of law. For this, the Boston Globe honored Lydia as a 2015 Bostonian of the Year, calling her "the lawyer with the heart of an activist." "To human traffickers and employers who don't play fair with immigrant workers, a word to the wise: Do not mess with **Lydia Edwards**."

**Lydia** went on to lead the City of Boston's new Office of Housing Stability, setting up a weekly clinic to help renters at risk of losing their homes and lobbying lawmakers to strengthen tenant protections.

**Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Housing and Development - **Lydia** wants to expand housing opportunity and create pathways to homeownership. "One of the ideas I have is that any time a building goes into foreclosure and there are tenants inside it, the tenants will be

able to purchase it at the foreclosure rate before a developer can. It's the right of first refusal and it actually works. It puts people on the pathway to ownership and sometimes gives them a chance they wouldn't have. If they can't afford to purchase it, they can assign that right or give it to a developer who will work with them to help them stay in their home."

2. Education - "I'm a proud product of public schools. Quality, free, local education is a necessity for any chance in today's world. Students, parents and teachers need funding and support from our city government. I will be a champion for public education across the district. The Boston Teachers' Union has endorsed **Lydia**.

3. Transportation - "I will approach developers with an eye toward aligning new projects to meet city goals on quality transportation access and environmental sustainability."

4. Environment - "I'll fight to implement stringent open space requirements for waterfront developers, maintain existing park space and create new green space, and push for an affordable ferry service to reduce transportation pollution.

**Seat Status:** Three people are running in the preliminary for this open seat, including Stephen Passacantilli, who worked for Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and the outgoing councilor Sal LaMattina. The preliminary will narrow the field down to two.

**Analysis of race:** **Lydia** is running for the East Boston, Charlestown and North End district city council seat after running for state senate last year and carrying East Boston, so she brings a proven East Boston base. She is running a strong grassroots campaign and is a top-tied candidate in this race.

[Candidates](#)

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**Kim Janey**  
**Boston**  
**City Council - District 7**  
***Preliminary Election - September 26th***

"I was born into a large family of educators, artists, entrepreneurs and activists, and they taught me the importance of service, leadership and protest. At an early age, I became a community organizer and I've been fighting for my community ever since."

Married out of high school and then becoming teen parents to **Kim**, both Kim's parents were teachers and came of age during the 1960's Civil Rights Movement. Her dad attended Northeastern and led a protest and take-over of the President's Office to fight for Black Studies at college. Her mom went to a Freedom School when she was young and participated in boycotts here in Boston to stand in solidarity with those in the South.

The first school **Kim** attended was the New School for Children, a community school **Kim's** parent's helped start which was modeled after the Freedom Schools of the South. After that, she went into Boston Public Schools, and "they wanted to hold me back a year, because...they thought [the school I was coming from] was a lower quality school, but my parents stood up and fought and said: no, she needs to go in her right grade, and so that was an important lesson for me as a little seven year-old girl; to see my parents stand up taught me the importance of parent voice and advocacy and, again, protest and organizing."

In the Boston Public Schools, she was bused to Charlestown during the 1970's desegregation era where, she says, she "learned a different kind of lesson around the ugliness of this city. Going to Charlestown and facing angry mobs who were throwing stones at us and calling us names as young children was traumatic." She finished her education and graduated high school through the METCO program.

**Kim** is currently the senior project director at the Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC), where she leads advocacy for equity, opportunity and access for children in Boston, and particularly for children of color, children living in poverty, immigrant students and students with disabilities. "In my work at MAC, I have worked with a lot of folks in the community: community-based organizations, parents, students to help them develop their voice around an advocacy agenda that will help us eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps."

**Key Priorities/Issues:**

1. Education - "I've taken all of the lessons in terms of my own education and have applied that in my own advocacy for children in Boston, fighting for them around closing the opportunity and achievement gap."
2. Development - "There's a lot of development happening in my neighborhood of Roxbury and that creates a great opportunity to see what we want to see in the neighborhood, but I think people are also fearful about what this means for them in terms of displacement. It's really important we have someone in district 7 who can be a strong voice of the residents, making sure we have a seat at the table, making sure that the residents who live there now will benefit from the development that's happening and have a say in what it actually looks like."

**Seat Status:** The sitting city councilor Tito Jackson is leaving the seat to run for mayor. Thirteen people are running for this open seat, including Somali-American refugee and immigrant rights activist Deeqo Jibril and former state representative Carlos Henriquez who was expelled from the House after being convicted of assaulting a woman. The non-partisan preliminary election will narrow the field down to two.

**Analysis of Race:** **Kim** has deep family roots in Roxbury, Fenway, South End and Dorchester district, has raised the most money among the field of candidates (a key indicator of strength and viability), and is running a strong campaign. Even as a first-time candidate, she is rising about the pack in this crowded race.

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**Jynai McDonald**  
**Springfield**  
**City Councilor At-large**  
***Preliminary Election - September 19***

**Jynai** is a lifelong resident of Springfield. She's a single mother to three children: one seven-year-old son and twins who are four-years-old.

Committed to the community through her lifetime work in nonprofits, she currently works as the Western Massachusetts Regional Manager at Training Resources of America, an organization that helps people enroll in college and provides job training. She works with an at-risk population and helps them become self-sufficient, which is her story as well.

A long-time community activist and Neighbor to Neighbor member, **Jynai** has advocated to increase services for youth as a way to prevent crime and has advocated for increased diversity in hiring at the soon-to-be-built MGM Springfield casino. She sits on the 15-member appointed Springfield Police and Community Relations Committee and works to improve relations between police and residents.

#### **Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Good Paying Jobs & Job Training - "MGM is coming into the city and it's important to ensure that residents are trained for these positions." **Jynai** also supports the "Fight for \$15" minimum wage.
2. Increasing Homeownership - "Springfield offers \$2,500 grants for homeowners but it used to be \$5,000. If Springfield could use that rainy day fund or extra money from the budget at the end of the fiscal year to get those grants up again, it would decrease blighted property and keep people here in the city."
3. Strengthen Our Public Schools - "It's important to increase parent engagement and clear the Pre-K wait list in the city. Many residents don't want to send their kids to Springfield Public Schools, but if there were more key stakeholders and influential people sending their kids to the schools, then the city itself would be more invested."
4. Other Hot Issues in the City -
  - Police Commission - **Jynai** supports and is pushing to replace the police commissioner with a policy commission body "so the hiring, firing and police accountability isn't left to just one person."
  - Residency Requirement - She also supports enforcing the residency requirement to work in the city. Five of the seven fire chiefs live in other cities. Their salaries and tax dollars could otherwise be reinvested in the city if they lived in Springfield.

**Seat Status:** One of the five at-large council seats are open. Fourteen candidates are running; only ten will make it to the general election. If elected, **Jynai** would be only the second black woman to serve on the Springfield City Council in it's history.

**Analysis of race:** Of the many amazing candidates running across the state this year, our friends at MassAlliance flagged **Jynai** as the candidate who needs our help the most and at the campaign this cycle where a donation would make the greatest impact. Western Massachusetts Politics and Insight says that, "the nature of Springfield's municipal electorate - older and whiter than the overall population - favors candidates from better-off neighborhoods in at-large races..., but an early look suggests McDonald could assemble a coalition broad enough to crack through, and presumably, govern."

[Candidates](#)

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**Nicole Castillo**  
**Newton**  
**City Councilor, Ward 1 At-Large**  
**General Election - November**

"I grew up in Pueblo, Colorado. Most of my family is from Southern Colorado and/or Northern Mexico so it's a pretty big deal that I'm in the Northeast. I attended the University of Colorado Boulder, then moved, first to Ithaca where I worked at a domestic violence shelter, and then to Boston to pursue a Masters of Divinity Degree at the Harvard Divinity School. My focus was on community organizing and advocacy from the perspective of engaged Buddhism."

"I had always known that I wanted to do some type of advocacy work related to social change, but it was really the experience I had when I was working in Ithaca that confirmed it."

In 2013, she moved to Newton to work as a domestic and sexual violence advocate at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. She is now the Public Policy Director at the Mass Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, where she "found herself at the front lines of repeated budget cuts at the state and federal level, and imminent threats to reproductive justice and women's rights." She is also a leader in the LGBTQ community and serves on the board of OUT Metrowest.

As a candidate, she sees her role as working on policy from her experience as an advocate.

**Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Sustainable Growth and Development - "There is a need for more housing but it's unclear in the community on how to develop that. There is a significant aging population who can't afford taxes on their homes and who want to downsize but there are no options. There needs to be civic dialogue around

that. I also support our efforts toward increased citywide use of renewable energy, more walkable and bikeable streets, and long-term solutions to our many public transportation needs."

2. Welcoming City Ordinance - "I support Newton's Welcoming City Ordinance, which I believe is both a testament to the type of inclusive community we are, and also ensures that no family, regardless of their immigration status, will be afraid to reach out to law enforcement if they are a victim of a crime, to seek medical attention, or to register their children for school." The sitting city councilor and incumbent Jay Ciccone is the only Newton city councilor who voted against the ordinance.

3. Opioid Crisis - The opioid epidemic is more severe in Newton than it is in Waltham, Brookline and Needham combined. "There needs to be a multi-organizational approach that addresses immediate and long-term needs.

4. Infrastructure Improvement - "In my conversations with folks at the doors, it is clear that we all feel incredibly frustrated by the state of our roads. I am pleased to see that our city has invested in StreetScan technology, so that we can begin not just to repair our roads, but to put them on a maintenance system to disrepair and reduce future costs."

5. Education and the Achievement Gap - "Latino and black students are achieving at 50% the rates of white and Asian-American students." (Latino and black students make up about 10% of students in Newton Public Schools.) "I will work with our school committee and teachers to ensure that there is funding to support our excellent public schools, and to address the achievement gap that persists among students of color so that all students have the best foundation to succeed. Excellent public education is how we ensure everyone gets the education they deserve."

**Seat Status:** There are two at-large Ward 1 seats (in which councilors represent the ward by vote is city-wide) and one additional Ward 1 councilor (in which the vote is limited to Ward 1). Three people are running for the two Ward 1 at-large seats, including incumbent Jay Ciccone. Current Ward 1 Councilor Alison Leary is leaving her seat to run for the Ward 1 at-large seat.

**Analysis of race:** Nicole is a recent addition to the race, which is not a problem; given that there's no preliminary, she has time to catch-up. In the short period of time she's been in the race, she's worn out two pairs of shoes door-knocking and shown strength and discipline in hitting her fundraising goals.

[Candidates](#)

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**Dimple Rana**  
**Revere**  
**City Councilor At-large**  
***Preliminary Election - September 12***

**Dimple** grew up in Revere and attended Revere Public Schools. Her family has lived in the city for over 30 years.

**Dimple** is the first person of color to work at City Hall. She is currently the Director of Healthy Community Initiatives. "I've seen first-hand that City Hall is not accessible to everyone, especially if you don't speak English."

Before working at City Hall, she worked as a youth worker and immigrant right advocate. In the 1990s, she worked with at-risk youth in Revere as part of Roca, which aims to disrupt the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping your people transform their lives. She also did HIV/AIDS outreach to youth of color in Boston and then moved to Cambodia to help refugees who were deported en masse from the US reintegrate into the country. She is also a Local 22 union member.

**Dimple** was diagnosed with cancer last year; she is currently in remission. It's not not an ideal time for her to run, but she watched a city council hearing in April in which two city councilors filed a motion declaring that Revere will never be a sanctuary city. One of the councilors said, "Those people [immigrants] multiple like cockroaches." After watching that, she felt like she had to run.

**Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Youth - Revere needs a youth center (there currently isn't one) and a new high school, one that could also serve as a full-service community center. Current high school is on the verge of losing accreditation because its science facilities are out of compliance with the state. A youth center and a new high school were initiatives that the youth in Revere Youth in Action, an organization she co-founded, advocated for.
2. Sustainable Economic Development and Not Displacement - "Revere is a gateway city and we need to create more empowerment opportunities ad stabilize households and neighborhoods. We need more rent-to-own housing programs and to adopt inclusionary zoning policy like Boston. It's important to make sure people who live here can stay here."

**Seat Status:** Of the five at-large seats, one is open. Twelve people are running, including former mayor Dan Rizzo. The top 10 will advance to the general election.

**Analysis of race:** **Dimple** can't afford to leave her job and run so it ties her hands in fundraising. (Election law says you personally can't fundraise for any political campaign, including your own, if you work in government. However, others can raise money for you.) In spite of this, her campaign is meeting their fundraising

goals. **Dimple** is the first and only woman of color to run for city council in Revere. In this 39% immigrant city, she is the kind of candidate who could inspire new, non-traditional, immigrant voters to show up.

[Candidates](#)

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**Stephanie Martins  
Everett  
City Council, Ward 2  
*Preliminary Election - September 19***

Born in Brazil to parents who divorced, **Stephanie** came to America to live with her father, a restaurant manager, when she was 14 years old. When she was 17, her father moved to Florida but she decided to stay so she could finish school. She had to work three jobs, making \$5.25/hr. minimum wage, to support herself. Two weeks before she would graduate from high school, her mom passed away in Brazil. Eleven month later, her grandfather, who helped raise her, passed away. She started underage drinking and, one night, was arrested for drunk driving after running a red light. She says that it was her wake-up call. "I went back to church to find my healing, and then I started helping other kids to go through challenges the right way instead of doing things that will only hurt yourself." She started volunteering with a youth ground and became a Big Sister.

She attended Harvard Extension School, graduation with a college degree eight years later. While she was at Harvard, she tutored Harvard employees who were applying for US citizenship. She herself became a US citizen in 2009.

Currently, she is a realtor, and has a company with her husband who is in construction; together they build and sell properties. She also does legal work for an attorney in Boston. She wants to go to law school.

#### **Key Priorities/Accomplishments:**

1. Making City Hall Accessible - She wants to make City Hall accessible to everyone, not just to those with friends in City Hall. She notes that nothing is translated into other languages.
2. Fighting for Everett Workers- **Stephanie** supports the Fight for \$15 minimum wage campaign. "It was hard enough for me to make it on minimum wage when I was 17 and working three jobs, and I didn't even have kids."
3. Food Security - Hunger is an issue in Everett. The city has a food pantry but it's under-utilized because of the shame people have around others knowing they are without food. "We need to re-imaging how to provide food to the hungry."
4. Education - "Kids get lost and don't get to the other side in terms of getting their degree. It's important that kids have a strong support system of teachers

and mentors." **Stephanie** voted against the charter school ballot initiative last year. "If we can do something better, why not do it for the public schools. There's no need to continue to segregate."

**Seat Status:** Three people are running for the city council seat, including the incumbent Stephen Simonelli. He lost his tongue to cancer and has a hard time speaking, so his nephew accompanies him and handles speaking duties. Though it is a ward council seat, the vote is citywide. Two people will move forward to the general election.

**Analysis of race:** In this 41% immigrant community, **Stephanie** is the only person of color running for city council and she would be the city's first Latina city councilor. Though voters in local races here are traditionally more white and older, **Stephanie** can win if she's able to inspire more no-traditional, progressive voters to turn out. She has gotten good press (a feature article in the Metro section of the Boston Globe in June.)

[Candidates](#)