



Massachusetts Incumbent Challengers August 2020

Here are my recommendations for candidates and organizations I trust to fight for long overdue legislative equity. Please consider donating to their campaigns.

[Damali Vidot – 2nd Suffolk](#)

[Erika Uyterhoeven – 27th Middlesex](#)

[12th Suffolk](#)

[Stephanie Everett – 12th Suffolk](#)

[Brandy Fluker Oakley – 12th Suffolk](#)

DONATE to DAMALI



Damali Vidot
2nd Suffolk

Damali ran for office because of her lived experience as a kid growing up in Chelsea. From her perspective, even though community engagement and schools were better funded while she was growing up, she still “got lost in the sauce.” Now, with fewer youth programs and waning school funding, **Damali** centers her leadership around the needs and dreams of the city's youth.

Damali was first elected in 2015 and became Council President during her second term in 2018. In the most recent city wide election - **Damali** was the highest vote getter. In her second term, **Damali** became the first woman elected to be Chelsea City Council president and served in this role for two years before stepping down to focus on local climate change, community resiliency, and transit equity. In doing so, she has been able to leverage her City Council and activist role.

Damali Vidot is a mom, community advocate, she's lived in Chelsea, Massachusetts since her family's move from New York City when she was 7. As an Afro-Latina raised by a union father and a mother who was a survivor of domestic violence, growing up, **Damali** grew up centered on the values of family, community, and justice. Nonetheless, like too many of us, she acutely experienced systematic failures of a biased criminal justice system, police brutality, and homelessness.

Damali shows up when times are hardest. She believes Charlestown and Chelsea deserve a representative that has been at the forefront of change that uplifts and centers the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community, and that she is uniquely qualified to take on this challenge.

Key Policy Priorities

- **Damali's** approach to policy is intersectional and systematic. She believes you can't talk about education, housing, immigration separately because to make change in those areas, you must address systemic white supremacy.
- **COVID19 Response:** The 2nd Suffolk has been an epicenter of COVID19. **Damali** has been disappointed by the incumbent's lack of attention to the district amid the outbreak. **Damali** would be a fierce and present advocate for her constituency around all things COVID19 for Chelsea and Charlestown.
- [Healthcare, and hospitality are two of the biggest industries](#) in the district, meaning a number of constituents are essential workers who are regularly exposed to the virus. If elected, she would file comprehensive COVID19 legislation that fully funds unemployment insurance, rent forgiveness, mortgage forgiveness, and small business grants, and also funds increased testing and contact tracing.
- **Education:** **Damali** believes there needs to be an overhaul of how we fund, invest in, and staff our public schools, especially those with majority students of color and immigrants. If elected, she would **push to honor the Student Opportunity Act**. **Damali** believes investment in schools must include universal Pre-K expanding after school enrichment programs through a progressive revenue tax. Additionally, **Damali** would advocate for the implementation of language justice and hiring practices in our schools that value representation and uplift the voices of those often left out of the process. **Damali** understands that for many children school is not just about learning. On Beacon Hill, she would advocate for high-quality, nutritious meals three times a day in all public schools and expand counseling and mental health services in our schools. She also would fight for legislation that addresses the needs of shelter insecure and homeless youth, including access to scatter sites, reliable transportation, and extra-curricular opportunities to root themselves in community.
- **Affordable Housing:** Folks in Chelsea are severely under housed, and many families live in close quarters - this is why the city has experienced the highest COVID19 infection rate in the state. In Charlestown, there is a huge economic gap in housing - folks either live in a condo or in public housing. Both parts of the district would benefit from intervention to make housing more affordable. **Damali** believes in development without displacement through regional partnerships with state supervision for a coordinated response that balances economic development and housing access. She would also advocate for statewide tenant protection bill that includes just cause eviction language, allows cities and towns to establish rent control, imposes real estate transfer fees on speculative purchases, seals all eviction proceedings records to prevent discrimination against tenants, and provides tenants the right of first refusal on their homes. Additionally, because she has lived through the rapid gentrification of Chelsea, **Damali** would file legislation that funds the creation of thousands of new affordable units with access to open and green space that meet the scale

needed to fully house homeless, poor, working poor, and middle-income folks who are struggling to make ends meet.

- **Government Transparency:** The campaign is centering government transparency because voters brought it to their attention. **Damali** reported that almost every voter she speaks with feels frustrated by their lack of access to their representatives. She signed the Act On Mass transparency pledge on June 10, 2020. **Damali** supports rules reform, specifically requiring bills to be made public 72 hours prior to a vote and requiring committee roll call votes to be made public.

Deep Democracy Race Analysis

This district is viewed as a reliable seat for those who traditionally hold power in Boston - the previous incumbent left the seat to work in Marty Walsh's administration. However, both Charlestown and Chelsea have seen a rapid increase in gentrification and income inequality in the last decade. Even as a COVID19 epicenter, Chelsea remains an afterthought for its current representation. **Damali** is running a robust yet socially distant insurgent campaign. Given her deep community work in Chelsea, both as an advocate and City Councilor, **Damali** is well known and respected by a core constituency of this district. Chelsea was also a major battle ground during Ayanna Pressley's 2018 Congressional campaign. While now Congresswoman Pressley narrowly lost Chelsea, [overall turnout did increase](#).

This district is in dire need of bold new leadership, and previous elections have primed the district to consider ousting an incumbent. Given **Damali's** profile, how much money she has raised, and how active her grassroots campaign has become, there is a real possibility she could win. Her campaign team is led and composed of key field staff from Ayanna Pressley's 2018 victory and is supported by key activists in Chelsea and Charlestown.

DONATE to ERIKA



Erika Uyterhoeven
27th Middlesex

Erika Uyterhoeven grew up in Wayland and is a first generation Japanese American. She was raised by a single mother, who worked as a flight attendant. After college, **Uyterhoeven** was an antitrust economist and strategy consultant. In these roles, she analyzed the economic damage companies cause when they break the rules of the market, which deeply influenced her to become a democratic socialist. Through her experience in the private sector, Erika has detailed knowledge of how corporations undermine worker's rights and profit from our government.

In 2016, she served on the National Field Team for the Bernie Sanders campaign. **Erika** was one of the first hires in Massachusetts, and was in charge of organizing volunteers from across New England for the New Hampshire primary. After Senator Sanders won the primary, **Erika** was promoted to National Out of State Organizing Director. The Sanders campaign was a seminal experience for **Erika**, because she

learned how disconnected “grasstops” can be from movement organizing. In 2018, **Erika** also worked on Nika Elugardo’s successful campaign to unseat the House Ways and Means Chair Representative Jeffrey Sanchez. From that campaign, **Erika** learned to create messaging on progressive issues that resonates with all voters.

Erika co-founded [Act on Mass](#), a nonprofit dedicated to activating grassroots organizers and voters to hold the Massachusetts State House accountable on progressive issues. In the fall of 2019, **Erika** mobilized more than 1,000 Act on Mass members to successfully block a \$37 million corporate tax break from being slipped into the budget.

Erika is running to be a progressive champion on Beacon Hill, and an unapologetic advocate for the next generation of Left.

Key Policy Priorities

- [The Climate Crisis](#): **Erika** is a passionate climate justice advocate. She is driven by the urgency of the crisis, [and cites leading scientists giving humanity 10 years](#) to dramatically transform as the baseline framework for all of her climate policy. **Erika** also believes a core tenant of talking about climate change is acknowledging the racial injustices inherent to the warming of the earth. She believes communities of color are more likely to experience health impacts related to pollution and to be. On Beacon Hill, **Erika** will center preparations for this disregard in any climate change advocacy and legislation.
 - Erika’s Legislative Imperatives around the climate crisis are:
 - Pass a Massachusetts Green New Deal and commit to 100% renewable energy by 2030
 - Fund the MBTA and make the T free—to create a safe, frequent, and reliable transportation system
 - Ensure communities and workers most affected by climate change lead the transition to a green economy
- [Affordable Housing](#): Over the past decade, [Somerville has seen the steepest increase in housing prices in Massachusetts](#), so **Erika** is centering her housing platform on residents and the right to safe, affordable and stable housing. She is critical of the private market “solutions,” and wants to put a stop to corporate welfare schemes that hurt residents through handouts to developers and an over-reliance on the construction of luxury units. When talking about affordable housing **Erika** is very purposeful about calling out the role of corporations in the displacement and gentrification of Somerville, and believes we must fundamentally rebuild our priorities and direct them away from profit.
 - **Erika’s Legislative Imperatives on Affordable Housing are:**
 - Housing as a human right by building affordable housing units, investing in existing public housing, and lifting the ban on rent control
 - Protect tenants rights, including the right to organize, the right to purchase, and passing a just cause eviction law

- Implement a housing first model to combat homelessness, guaranteeing permanent supportive housing and support services
 - Ensuring that all development projects are built by local, union labor that protects wages and ensures the highest safety standards.
- **Government Transparency:** **Erika** co-founded Act on Mass (AOM), an organization that fights for government transparency on Beacon Hill. She deeply understands that the lack of transparency in state government is leading to policy outcomes that do not reflect what the majority of Massachusetts residents want. Having organized on Beacon Hill, it is important to her that she is a candidate and elected officials who not only represent their constituents views, and that they will stand up for them in public even when it's uncomfortable.
 - **Erika's Legislative Imperatives on Government Transparency:**
 - Work with State Representatives to make the rules of the State House more transparent so voters know how their representatives are voting
 - Lift all voices and make them heard in the State House so that policy reflects the progressive values of Somerville and Massachusetts
 - Push for debate about meaningful issues on the floor of the State House
- **Public Education:** **Erika** names Massachusetts having one of the worst achievement gaps in the country as a core issue she wants to address when elected. In 2018, she led the Fund our Future campaign which increased funding by \$1.5B per year, by re-writing the funding formula. As a State Representative, **Erika** would push for universal Pre-K Education, a moratorium on high stakes testing, and increased funding for our school districts.
 - **Erika's Legislative Imperatives on Public Education are:**
 - All students deserve a high quality education with small class sizes and fully funded programs for special education and English language learners
 - Guarantee universal access to high-quality Pre-K education
 - Ensure all students of public universities graduate debt-free

Deep Democracy Race Analysis

With Denise Provost stepping down, the 27th Middlesex is an open seat and **Erika's** opponent is a Democrat named Catia Sharp. Catia is a Harvard Kennedy School graduate who worked in Deval Patrick's administration, and appears to be a traditional Massachusetts Democrat. **Erika** has raised her opponent by \$10,000, and is running an aggressive (yet socially distant) grassroots campaign. **Erika's** campaign has worked to innovate around how they engage voters; they host bi-

weekly live streams where she provides updates on Beacon Hill COVID19 legislation, and where she interviews Somerville elected officials and activists on pressing issues such as income inequity and mass incarceration. Erika's campaign is also hosting a number of virtual house party style events to help expand their volunteer base. Because of **Erika's** background as a community organizer with [Act on Mass](#), and her volunteer strategist work with now State Representative Nika Elugardo, she has some access to a prepared and experienced progressive volunteer base.

This district is perfect for a Democratic Socialist like **Erika**. Somerville is becoming increasingly progressive, as young people and other non-traditional voters continue to show up to vote. In 2017, Somerville saw its highest voter turnout in a municipal election in the city's history, with 31.67% of registered voters casting ballots, up from 14% in 2015. It was a contentious election year, with several Ward Aldermen being challenged by Our Revolution Somerville candidates. That cycle is colloquially described as the "OR takeover." In 2018, Ayanna Pressley won all of Somerville except one precinct, and won overwhelmingly in parts of Somerville that had younger and middle age voters between 18 to 49 and more people of color. A very important fact to note is that **Erika's** district makes up the majority of the districts won by Congresswoman Pressley in 2018.

12th Suffolk

12th Suffolk is one of the most racially and socioeconomically diverse districts in the Commonwealth. It is made up of 15 precincts in Boston (Mattapan and Dorchester) and two precincts in Milton. In 2018, 12th Suffolk Ayanna Pressley expanded by 17.2 percent from 2016 and 6.7% from 2014. Mattapan was one of the critical communities of color who turned out en masse to elect now Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. She won every precinct in the 12th Suffolk. Dan Cullinane was first elected to represent the 12th Suffolk in a 2013 special election to replace Linda Dorcena Forrey when she was elected to the Senate. With the current incumbent retiring, 12th Suffolk has an opportunity to elect a progressive woman of color again who would do right by them in the legislature. However, voters have a tough choice on Election Day. Stephanie Everett and Brandy Fluker Oakley are both progressive women of color running impressive campaigns. We're recommending folks contribute to both candidates as an investment in the pipeline of candidates of color in Boston.

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WEBSITE



Stephanie Everett
12th Suffolk

Stephanie Everett was born and raised in Mattapan, where she currently lives with her husband and children. Being raised by a single mother with a mental health condition and her father in jail, presented a unique set of challenges growing up, and at a young age **Stephanie** became responsible for caring for and protecting her younger siblings. At the age of 19, **Stephanie** became a teen mom and a year later found herself homeless, living in a shelter with her daughter. Despite these challenges, Stephanie refused to let society determine her fate. She enrolled back in college, graduating from

Northeastern University in 2002 and earned her Juris Doctorate from Suffolk University Law School in 2008

Stephanie has devoted much of her professional career to public service. She served as State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz's first Deputy Chief of Staff, where she successfully advocated for foreclosure prevention legislation, and then as the Chief of Staff to the Department of Transitional Assistance under Governor Deval Patrick, an agency she once relied on. For the last six years, **Stephanie** has been in private practice, with an emphasis on criminal law, business contracts, and real estate matters.

Personal and professional experiences have provided **Stephanie** with the tools to tackle the major concerns of the community: housing, education, and employment. **Stephanie's** time at the state house has granted her with experience-driven knowledge, preparing her to get work on day one on policies that best support the residents of the 12th Suffolk District.

Key Policy Issues

- Top two campaign issues are **education and intersectional income equity**, and **Stephanie** views them as inextricably linked. Making public education accessible to all students and the parents who are supporting them is her number one priority. As the mother of a special needs student with an Independent Education Plan (IEP), she has experienced the barriers in public education for non-traditional learners.
- Concerned about how drastically COVID19 is impacting quality education, limiting the support students need around food security and parents of special needs and lower income students. There is a need for action to prevent the increase of the high school dropout rate that may occur due to students working instead of being in school and making money their families will need due to the oncoming recession.
- Supports progressive revenue tax as a critical component in how we make structural change to our public education system
- Concerned about the economic crash and foreclosure boon that is about to hit Black communities. She is very worried about how homeowners in her district may be laid off and unable to pay their mortgage as well as how that could pave the way for gentrification in neighborhoods that were historically filled with Black homeowners.
- The absence of lived experience like **Stephanie's** in the legislature could be life or death for a lot of families, and she would approach each day at the statehouse with that in mind.
- If elected, **Stephanie** wants to be a champion for transparency and rules reforms.
- She also supports funding to invest in digital and IT overhaul of how the state house operates and disseminates information to the general public and advocates.



Brandy Fluker Oakley 12th Suffolk

Brandy Fluker Oakley grew up in both Dorchester and Mattapan. She is a proud graduate of Boston Public Schools. Raised by a single mother from the segregated south, Brandy has a long-standing passion for social justice and organized her first protest in the third grade.

Never one to accept the status quo, Brandy has dedicated her career to advocacy, education equity, and progressive causes.

Upon graduating from Boston Latin School, she attended Syracuse University. After graduation, **Brandy** taught third-grade in Baltimore. **Brandy** is passionate about education, however during her time as a teacher, she learned of the systemic barriers faced by her students and their family. As such, she chose to go to law school to learn more about a system she wanted to undue.

After law school, **Brandy** became a public defender with the Committee for Public Counsel Services in the Boston Municipal and Chelsea District Courts. While zealously representing clients, **Brandy** witnessed firsthand systemic inequities and how those who are not served well by our public school system, are served very well by our criminal justice system. This observation launched her career into policy and political advocacy.

Brandy believes in the power of democracy and that communities are more than capable of identifying solutions to address their most pressing needs and challenges. Brandy formerly served as a member of the Mattahunt Community Advisory Board and was active in Mattapan United. She is the founder and president of Delighting in God Ministries (D.I.G.), a faithful member of her church, member of the Dorchester YMCA, and a practicing attorney.

Key Policy Issues

- As a former educator, with a Master in Education, Brandy is very passionate and specific about how she wants to fight for education reform. Brandy believes our education system does not serve our current society. She would fight to change the agrarian education system and prioritize hiring Black educators. She believes we need to give students opportunities to learn about workforce opportunities that don't require college.
- As a former teacher, Brandy believes meaningful family engagement is critical to foster true partnership and collaboration between educators and families, including parent mentors or home visits.
- Fixing our education system means investing in opportunities for children outside of the classroom. She would encourage more community development of quality schools to address the whole child, including their academic and socio-emotional needs.
- Believes Beacon Hill needs a comprehensive review of regulations on new businesses that move into the state and how we uplift our public schools.

For instance, she would support workforce pipeline programs and a built-in partnership between schools and companies, for any business that came into the state. If elected, Brandy would prioritize legislating affordable housing because in Mattapan as a neighborhood is rapidly gentrifying. Mattapan has the 3rd most homeowners of any neighborhood in Boston. To protect long time homeowners, Brandy would file legislation to expand residential tax exemption, so folks aren't pushed out of the neighborhood based on property taxes. On behalf of her constituents who rent, Brandy would also advocate for rent stabilization, to allow local rent stabilization to provide families and residents predictability in rent increases.

Deep Democracy Race Analysis

The 12th Suffolk is a competitive three way race with no clear frontrunner. The third candidate in the race Haitian American Jovan Lacet, who ran against Representative Cullinane in 2016 and 2018 - and in the previous primary only lost by 420 votes. His high name recognition, and his strong standing in the Haitian community - a strong voting block in this district - make him a formidable opponent.

Stephanie and **Brandy** are both running strong campaigns. Stephanie has raised \$50,000 and has gained endorsements from IBEW 103, State Representative Russel Holmes, Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, and the Ward 12 Committee. **Brandy** has raised \$44,000 and has been endorsed by the Sunrise Movement, Representative Chynah Tyler, Massachusetts Teachers Association, SEIU 509, and SEIU 1199. Both Stephanie and **Brandy** are running competitive campaigns - it will come down to who can mobilize the most voters to participate in Vote By Mail, and vote in person on election day.