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**PROGRESSIVE TRAILBLAZER NIKA ELUGARDO
SUBMITS SIGNATURES TO SECURE SPOT IN 15TH SUFFOLK RACE**

*The longtime community advocate says she will “bring the power
and voice of the people back to the State House.”*

JAMAICA PLAIN—Backed by a broad and rapidly growing coalition of support, progressive trailblazer Nika Elugardo has garnered more than the necessary signatures to enter the 15th Suffolk House race.

Elugardo, who previously served as senior policy advisor to state Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz, has won over potential voters in Mission Hill, Jamaica, Roslindale, and Brookline with an unwaveringly progressive platform. It includes a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, criminal justice reform, quality education, and equal pay for women.

"It's been an incredible honor to see how our message of opportunity, prosperity, and justice for all has been met with such enthusiasm in the community, especially as we move toward our official kickoff," Elugardo says. "It's time to bring the power and voice of the people back to the State House."

A pioneering advocate for opportunity and justice, Elugardo has spent the last two decades working in community and economic development alongside public, private and nonprofit leaders, especially leaders in the state's African-American and immigrant communities.

From managing the National Consumer Law Center's Foreclosure Prevention Project, which boasted an 88-percent success rate keeping families in their homes, to helping launch MassSaves, which connects low and middle-income residents to vetted community banks and financial coaches across the country, Elugardo has a proven record of fighting for working people.

"As a child, I could see how poverty and injustice impacted our communities. Since then, I've dedicated my life to the struggle for social justice," Elugardo says. "The people of Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, Roslindale, and Brookline deserve someone who has fought for the same values as hard as they have. We need to make sure that this district is the most progressive in Massachusetts."

Elugardo graduated with honors from MIT, where she studied under legendary community activist and long-time friend and mentor Mel King. She won several leadership awards for her community organizing on and off campus, including the National Council of Negro Women's "Student Leader of the Year" award. Elugardo continued her studies at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government before enrolling in Boston University's School of Law.

"I knew Nika's district would be eager to put her on the ballot," King says. "She is committed to community building and quality economic security based on the power of love. I look forward to joining Nika at her campaign kickoff next Wednesday."

Elugardo will formally kick off her campaign March 21 at 6 p.m. at the Frogmore (365 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain). Members of the press interested in attending should contact Cristina Aguilera at (617) 971-8743 to RSVP.

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If you would like more information about Nika's campaign or would like to arrange an interview, please e-mail info@electnika.com or visit www.electnika.com.