



Committee to Elect Nika Elugardo | MA State Representative, 15th Suffolk/Norfolk District
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*PIONEERING ADVOCATE FOR OPPORTUNITY,
PROSPERITY, AND JUSTICE*

In this climate where no one can take political and legislative justice for granted, Nika Elugardo is determined to use [her leadership and advocacy skills in the Massachusetts legislature](#) — where balance toward justice can rest on a single unyielding vote.

**RUNNING TO BUILD COALITIONS THAT
REPRESENT HER COMMUNITY**

Nika, whose name means ‘she conquers,’ grew up believing that all children can be anything and overcome anything regardless of status, income or disability. She often says that life’s darkest struggles can produce our brightest and most passionate leaders, and that our toughest circumstances become launching pads to success when we work together.

The [15th Suffolk/Norfolk District communities](#) of Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, Brookline and Roslindale are among the most progressive in Massachusetts. Nika, who lives with her husband in the heart of the district in Jamaica Plain, is rapidly garnering broad support for her candidacy for Massachusetts State Representative because her life’s work demonstrates dogged commitment to enabling every resident has just access to opportunities to thrive and prosper.



Opportunity

Prosperity

Justice



CAREER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over many years living in Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill and Roslindale, Nika has worked in local community advocacy and state, national, and international politics.

Nika's professional career helping nonprofit and business leaders work together to break injustice and open doors to opportunity began at the [National Consumer Law Center](#) (NCLC) in Boston, where she managed NCLC's [Foreclosure Prevention Project](#). Bringing housing advocates and banking institutions to the table, the Project had an 88% success rate of keeping people in their homes. Nika and her team used [innovative financial strategies](#) now commonplace across the country. Nika also helped update model NCLC payment plans that made energy affordable to low-income families and elders while saving money on utilities. This kind of win-win negotiation has marked Nika's continued career as an organizer, trainer, and leader in collaborative community development.

Over 20 years, Nika continued in community and economic development, working with public, private and nonprofit leaders active in Black and Latino communities in Massachusetts. She founded the research and consulting departments at the [Emmanuel Gospel Center](#), which has supported breakthrough models and collaboration in education, youth violence prevention, and anti-trafficking in Boston and other urban areas across Massachusetts.

Nika later worked as Jamaica Plain Liaison and Senior Policy Advisor to Massachusetts Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz, strengthening advocacy for legislative, budget & policy initiatives in housing, healthcare finance, consumer protection, transportation, elder care, and financial services. In 2013 she helped the [Midas Collaborative](#) and then State Treasurer Grossman unite advocates to launch [MassSaves](#). The pioneering MassSaves coalition connects residents to vetted community banks and financial coaches across the country and helps low and moderate-income people build financial confidence.



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EARLY LIFE & EDUCATION

Nika began discovering the power that elected officials have to make social change years ago through opportunities at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she studied Political Advocacy and Leadership. Realizing that power was often centralized in the hands of a few who knew nothing of her own life and struggle, and that of people like her, she was convinced that she should one day run for political office. This was confirmed when, while at Boston University Law School, Nika interned at the State Senate studying Massachusetts's constitutional law and tax reform.

Honed by life, education, and long experience engaging in justice work in Boston's communities, Nika's passion for community change began at home. The oldest of seven children, Nika was born to vibrant and energetic young parents who tried to figure out how to make ends meet in neighborhoods where racism, drugs, crime, eviction notices and utility shutoffs were a part of life. What they lacked in material means, her parents and close-knit extended family more than made up for through love and support. They challenged Nika to put God first and to do great things for, and with, the community.

Precocious as a child, Nika had an early sense of the unfair impacts of poverty and injustice in her community. By middle school, she was involved in tutoring, mentoring, and youth work. Her family moved frequently, and she changed schools often. Ultimately, she earned scholarships to pursue studies at MIT. From her freshman year, Nika committed herself to spending half of her time on activism, including working on justice issues in education and homelessness with her advisor, Mel King. In 1995, she received a Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies and Planning. Finishing her coursework with honors, Nika won several leadership awards for her community organizing in and outside of MIT, including the [Ronald E. McNair award](#), named after America's first black astronaut, and the [National Council of Negro Women](#) Student Leader of the Year award.

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