

ATTENTION!

75th Anniversary of the Boston Teachers Union Celebration Party

postponed until

October 16, 2021



BOSTON TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 66, AFT

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President's Report Jessica J. Tang

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

As news of Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg's** passing dominated the weekend of Rosh Hashana, it was easy to fall into despair during a time when, those of Jewish faith, were supposed to be celebrating a new year. As we mourned both the loss of an incredible justice who was integral to so much of who we as social justice educators stand for and also a symbol of justice and progress critical to the tenuous balance on the Supreme Court, it was hard not to feel at a loss.

However, it is Ruth Bader Ginsburg words herself that must give us solace and the strength to keep going. "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." In remembrance of her, and in honoring her legacy and everything she continues to stand for, we must keep fighting and fight in a way that we will continue to build power and bring others in to join us.

We cannot just mourn, we must continue to organize, fight and win. This means not only for educational justice, but for the social, racial and economic justice issues that impact both our ability to teach well with the resources we need and those that impact our students, families and BTU members livelihoods and wellbeing. This means that in the new few days, we have a responsibility to do all we can do to right the balance of justice.

Women's rights, labor rights, student rights, and our public education system are now in peril if Donald Trump appoints a new Supreme Court Justice before the people have a say in who our next President will be. **We must defeat Donald Trump and take back the U.S. Senate, and the BTU is All-In to make that a reality.** Now, more than ever we need all of our members to do their part.

The BTU will be supporting the national efforts of our affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) primarily by focusing on New England, which means ensuring that **Joe Biden** wins New Hampshire and Maine, as well as electing **Sara Gideon** to the U.S. Senate to replace Senator Susan Collins in Maine.

Our power as a union comes from our ability to mobilize thousands of members, so we ask that you think about your capacity in the **next few weeks and do everything in your power to help us win this election. Here are ways that you can help us to organize and fight back today:**

- Sign up today for AFT Phone Banks

- Sign up for the BTU Political Activist list
- Join the BTU Electoral Action Team (BEAT) to:
 - Help us recruit volunteers at your school or worksite.
 - Organize the members in your neighborhood or community.

After you have recruited members to participate, ask them to recruit more people. Every volunteer makes a difference!

Please call or email our new BTU Political Organizer **Roberto Jimenez** to learn more about how to get involved (603-260-9448, rjimenez@btu.org)

If you feel comfortable doing socially distant in-person canvassing or literature drops (leaving printed materials on

doors) in Maine or New Hampshire, please also contact Roberto. He is working full time on all 2020 election effort and is here to assist all of our members in organizing and getting involved.

In addition, we will be setting up BTU-specific phone banks a few times a week where anyone can join and make phone calls. These calls will mainly be to other AFT households, or to other union families. If you want to do get involved in a way that is not on this list, please call or email **Johnny McInnis** and **Roberto Jimenez**, and we will help you make a difference.

Again, this is the time not just to mourn, but to organize. If we heed **Ruth Bader Ginsburg's** words, we must begin by having the one to one conversations



Jessica J. Tang
BTU President

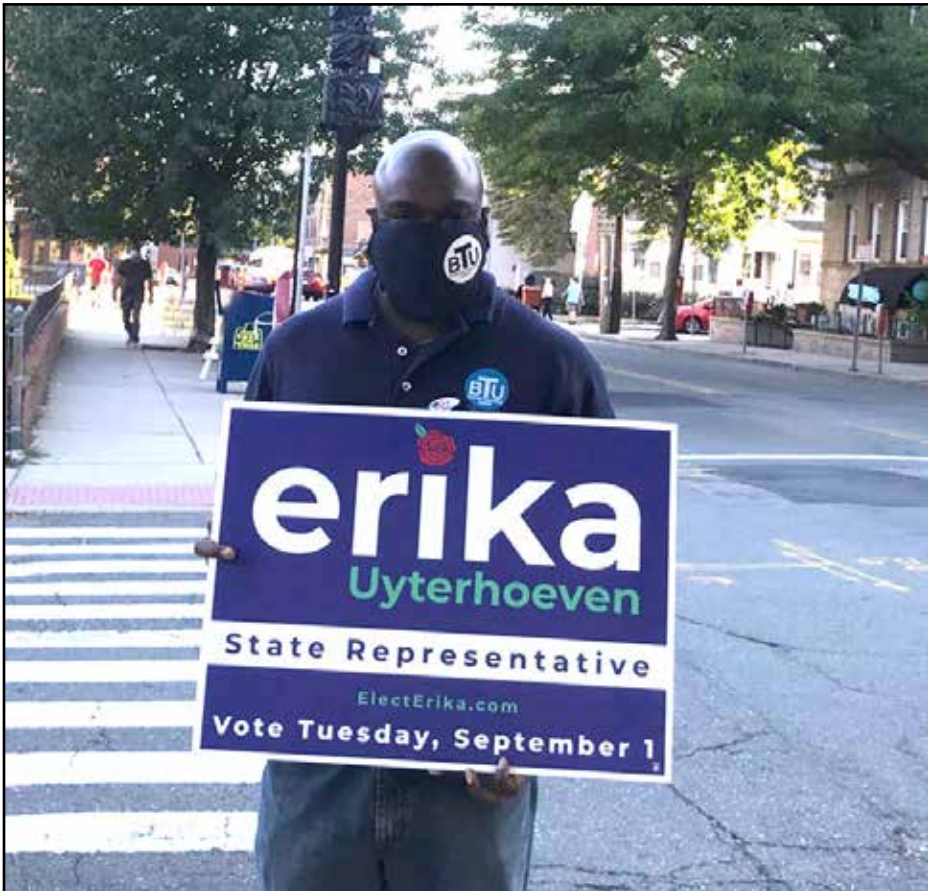
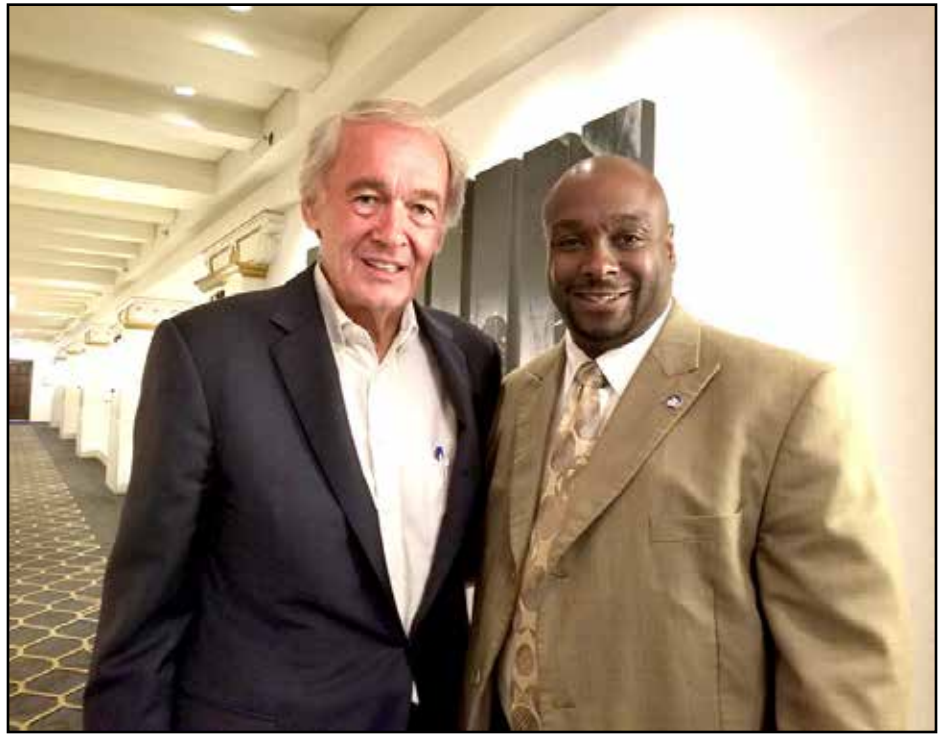
that are critical to bringing in others to join us.

To get involved today, please contact:

- **Johnny McInnis**, BTU Political Director: jmcinnis@btu.org or 617-433-0488
- **Roberto Jimenez**, BTU Political Organizer: rjimenez@btu.org or 603-260-9448



See BTU's Endorsed Candidates on page 8.



The BTU Hits the Campaign Trail!



What are Some of the Health Measures Contained in the BTU/BPS Memorandum of Understanding?

BPS will provide publicly available weekly reports on incidents of infection by school.

The BPS partners with the BPHC (Boston Public Health Commission) who will monitor key data metrics so the BPS can plan & respond appropriately to public health issues that arise. Critical metrics are measured citywide & by neighborhood as a 7-day trailing moving average which will include: daily number of positive tests; daily percent of positive tests, and daily visits to emergency rooms with COVID-19-like symptoms. BPHC will post these metrics on its public-facing website twice a week. BPS will link from its website to BPHC metrics. BPS will provide sufficient translated directions on BPS website to ensure BPHC metrics are readily understandable by BPS community.

If citywide COVID-19 positivity rate rises above 45 citywide, BPS will transition to full remote learning for all students, and BTU bargaining unit members will have the option to be remote as well. When BPHC or another City/State authority determines BPS can reopen, BTU members will be expected to return to BPS buildings.

Free COVID-19 tests are available at sites around Boston. If the COVID-19 positivity rate is at or above 8% (double the citywide metric) in any neighborhood identified by the BPHC at the same time that the citywide positivity rate remains below 4%, BPS will offer free COVID-19 testing weekly to up to 5% of BTU bargaining unit members. Testing will be random, with oversampling drawn from staff working at school sites in neighborhoods with positivity rates measuring at or above 8%. If no neighborhood exceeds 8% positivity rate, BPS will provide up to 5% of BTU members with such testing, but with oversampling of BTU members whose work regularly place them in close physical proximity to students who require physical support, such as hand-over-hand support & modeling, feeding, toileting, physical restraint, etc. Teachers will not be eligible for re-testing as part of this program within 14 days of a prior test. Testing will only be available for members physically reporting to school buildings with students. Test results will be available to tested person & BPHC within 48 hours.

What are Some of the Employee Expectations Contained in the BTU/BPS MOU?

Where ever the MOU is silent, the BTU/BPS contract is in place concerning employee/employer expectations, work conditions, schedules, and so forth.

All BTU Staff will work their regular, contractual hours. All BTU staff will

work their regular contractual hours every Wednesday, whether remote or in buildings. Wednesdays will include synchronous & asynchronous learning opportunities for students that require sufficient time on learning to account for a full day of instruction. Employees shall receive their full pay & benefits as provided in the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement/BTU contract) & as adjusted by this MOU.

During the time of COVID-19, each staff member will record their attendance/absence electronically at or before the start of the work day as instructed by BPS. BTU members will enter their absences into the Substitute Online (SubCentral) program to request daily coverage and into ESS system for payroll purposes.

All teachers will be required to use Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw for each of their classes, unless BPS recommends use of any improved program. Google Classroom will be available for all teachers, grades K0-12 & SeeSaw will be available for teachers of students in grades K0-6.

BTU members are expected to report all facility concerns directly & immediately to the school's principal/HM/director. (Please do so in writing and make sure the BTU Reps maintain this list to be able to report it to the BTU).

All staff must wear a mask/face covering while on school property unless provided with an individual accommodation due to disability and/or health consideration, as approved by the BPS Office of Human Capital.

Staff bathrooms will be limited to one adult occupant at a time. Teachers should clean their personal space & personal work area, including their desk. Teachers are responsible for instructing students to clean desks and other student specific surfaces.

What is Entailed in the MOU Under Home Health Screening?

Before entering the building each day, each staff member will complete a health checklist developed by the BPS. Employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19 shall report the diagnosis to the Office of Human Capital immediately. Students will be required to self-check temperatures & other symptoms of illness before coming to school.

In the event students behave in a way that jeopardizes public health & safety, the BPS will enforce the Code of Conduct. Safety protocols will be clearly defined for students & parents prior to students entering the school. Student adjustments may include:

- Teacher redirection and/or reminders as needed;
- Removal of student from the classroom & notification of parent;

- Alternative instruction provided in a safe environment.

When are School Site Council Elections & Meetings Held?

The School Site Council (SSC) is the central governing body of the school under the school-based management/shared decision-making model. The contract stipulates; ***"Elections for new SSC members shall be conducted as early in the school year as possible [by October 15], and a first meeting of the new council shall be held no later than October 31st."*** *At the first meeting, a monthly calendar should be agreed upon by the SSC members for the entire school year and be made public through distribution to all staff and parents. Any change must be approved by the SSC with at least one week's notice to all staff & Parents. SSC Meetings should be at times convenient for all members & times may alternate to meet this goal.*

What is the Basic Roles of the School Site Council (SSC) and the SSC Personnel Subcommittee?

The School Site Council (SSC) is the central governing body of the school under the school-based management/shared decision-making model, & is required to exist in all public schools by state law. SSC are composed of the Principal, a set number of elected by secret ballot (by Oct 15) BTU members determined by the total number of BTU members who work more than 50% of their work week at the school, parents of children at the school elected through the Parent Council, and in high schools, two voting student members, elected by the student body. Each SSC is responsible for finding ways to implement the intent of the provisions governing school-based management in ways that do not violate outstanding court orders or state/federal laws & regulations. SSC is governed by the contract. Further info is found in the current BTU/BPS contract pages 7-16.

The role of the SSC shall be:

- Review & approve School Improvement Plan
- approve the budget for discretionary school materials, supplies, textbooks & equipment
- develop & approve plans for increasing parent involvement in the school



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

- approve waivers
- review & approve recommendations of Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) that will have a major effect on the school community
- review & approve recommendations from any other committee or group that's established to recommend changes that will have a major effect on the school community
- receive information about all outside programs or outside professionals that come into the school
- review & comment on entire school budget, including the General Fund & External Funds budgets, in a timely fashion. Upon written request, SSC members shall be provided with written or electronic copies of school budgets

The role of the Personnel Subcommittee of the School Site Council shall be: Governed by the contract & is composed of two of the elected BTU members of the SSC, one elected SSC parent member, & at high school level, one SSC elected student member. Each SSC member group selects their own representative(s).

to approve the hiring of new BTU teachers' bargaining unit staff & in-transfer of BTU teachers' bargaining unit staff from other schools in the system & the choice of teachers from the excess pools/PTPP approve the selection of Teacher Leaders, New Teacher Developers/mentor teachers, Lead Teachers, & new athletic coaches

determine the schedule & procedures for reviewing candidates for positions

BTU Phone Numbers	
Office.....	617-288-2000
Health & Welfare	617-288-0500
AFT Massachusetts.....	617-423-3342
Function Office	617-288-3322
Lounge Office.....	617-288-3322
Vision Center	617-288-5540
Tremont Credit Union.....	781-843-5626



Boston Union Teacher

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

¡TODOS SON BIENVENIDOS AQUÍ!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Boston Teachers Union,
AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO

EDITORIAL NOTE:
The opinions expressed in the *Boston Union Teacher* do not necessarily represent the views of the Boston Teachers Union, or those of its members.

WHEN WRITING:
All correspondence to the *Boston Union Teacher* must be typewritten and include the author's name and school or department if not school-based. All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste. Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org

DEADLINE:
The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the *Boston Union Teacher* is November 11th. All copy should be e-mailed to mmaguire@btu.org and gvirchick@btu.org. This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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The Ballot and the Fight for Democracy

Election night 2020. Trump declares victory with millions of mail-in ballots still to be counted, emboldened by a Fox News declaration that he has won the electoral college. Lawsuits are filed demanding to stop any further count. Armed white militias surround 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue vowing to protect Trump following a conspiracy theory spreading on Facebook and Twitter that Antifa is planning a coup d'état. The Supreme Court, weakened by the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, seems ready to go along with the New Confederacy who control the White House and the United States Senate.

If this seems farfetched, like a bad Tom Clancy novel, think about what has been happening so far in this election season. Every chance he gets Trump claims the election is being rigged by the Democrats with millions of "fraudulent" mail-in ballots. He also falsely claims that radical violent extremists are filling the streets in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests, despite the fact that the vast number of protests have been peaceful, most of the violence being incited by militarized police forces, white supremacist militias, and troops dispatched from Homeland Security by Attorney General William Barr.

Combine this with what seems to be a recurring theme, Republican controlled state houses are using all the power they have to suppress the vote and disenfranchise millions of voters. The ultra-conservative *Judicial Watch* has filed lawsuits in six states claiming that voter rolls are not being maintained and they should be purged of ineligible votes. The American Civil Liberties Union Voting Rights Project points out that while it is

important that voter rolls be maintained, it is equally true that overly aggressive purging of voter rolls "...have been again and again shown to disproportionately impact racial and language minority communities."

Bottom line, the importance of this Presidential election is more than clear. Our Democracy will be at risk if we end up with four more years of Trump. A conservative Supreme Court will further erode a woman's right to choose. Millions of people will lose health care if the Affordable Care Act is gutted, or outright ruled "unconstitutional". Trump's law and order rhetoric will continue to embolden police forces as more and more Black lives are lost to excessive force. And the already well-armed white militias will continue to organize as Trump refuses to speak out against what is a very large part of his political base.

Voting this election, however, is just the start of what we all have to do. We should all be volunteering some of our time to convince others to vote for Joe Biden and defeat Donald Trump. The American Federation of Teachers is organizing phone banking. Go to <https://www.mobilize.us/aft/> and sign up for as many sessions as you can do. Sign up to be a BTU Political Activist - <https://btu.org/political-action/btu-parents-community-allies-political-activist-list/>. Join the BTU Electoral Action Team by contacting BTU Organizer Roberto Jimenez (603-260-9448, rjimenez@btu.org)

In addition, we need to be thinking strongly about what we will do as a union if Trump indeed decides to contest mail-in ballots and refuse to step down, causing a constitutional crisis in our country. Already at the national level there are

organizations organizing to stop any attempt to undermine the election. The Frontline - <https://thefrontline.org/> - is one of those organizations. It is a joint project between the Working Families Party and the Movement for Black Lives Electoral Justice Project. The Frontline will be organizing a mass mobilization on November 4th to make it clear that any machinations of Trump to subvert the election will not be tolerated.

Another national formation is Protect the Vote - <https://protecttheresults.com/> - a joint project of Indivisible and Stand Up America to protect the valid results of the 2020 election. In their own words, "If Trump loses, he must accept those results. Our democracy depends on it."

After the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Trump is already moving to consolidate his power and refuse to step down, even if the people vote him out. Four years ago, the Republican-controlled Senate refused to give a hearing to Obama-nominated Justice to the Supreme Court Merrick Garland, saying that the American people should first decide the President, despite the fact that the election was ten months away. This year, with only six weeks to go before the election Trump said on Fox News, "We should act quickly (to install a new Justice) because we're going to have probably election things involved here, you know, because of the fake ballots that they'll be sending out."

The Boston Teachers Union needs to consider connecting to The Frontline and Protect the Vote. If Trump refuses to step down after losing a fair election everything must be on the table, including shutting down sections of the economy.



Garret Virchick
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

We live in ominous times brothers and sisters. The last four years have been brutal on the American people. This year alone we have lost over 200,000 people to a virus due to the willful ignorance of the Trump administration who saw it as an obstacle to be ignored, as he moved to win re-election. We have seen the continued murder of Black people at the hands of the police and the righteous rebellion of Black Lives Matter that followed. The economy has been destroyed through Trump's botched COVID-19 response and millions are out of work and have lost their health insurance. And the recent fires on the west coast and a record hurricane season has reminded us that climate change is here while anti-science ideologues control our government.

It's times like this that organization and solidarity across the union movement is so important. We need to stand together and with others, **BTU Proud. BTU organized!**

Commentary Paul Eaton

Why Do We Support Universal Education?

Months ago the title of this article may have appeared as educational blasphemy, but today I ask it in all earnestness. What is the purpose of active in-person instruction?

The COVID-19 pandemic has torn through our society and exposed fundamentals. Prior to this period, I assumed that others held my core views. However, this crisis has forced people to show their own true values. Hypocrisy, disconnect, and duplicity have all been blatantly exposed bare in the face of actual mortal decisions and existential uncertainty.

The essential question of "why do we teach" is implicit and center stage in all argumentation used back in March to keep the schools open and also all arguments being used today to resume face-to-face teaching. Sadly there is a huge disconnect between my answer to that question and the argumentation being used by those in power.

To me, teaching has been all about imparting skills, building character, and empowering our students to reach their fullest adult potential. I see myself as a small but important part of society working towards the greater good. I know that most of what I "achieve" is invisible and intangible. I also know that the seeds that I helped plant won't reach fruition until time has passed and I am out of the picture.

Back in March schools stayed open passed the point where the majority of students and teachers knew of the viral dangers that had arrived in our com-

munity. Main arguments used centered around food distribution. Throughout the closure process the question of food distribution was a central justification for staying open.

Now that remote learning has

Remote learning, while inferior to that in the classroom, does have the potential to impart some skills.

resumed, people are asking questions that again draw on the central question, "why do we teach?" The pandemic has become endemic, but there is hope for a vaccine on the near horizon. Food-distribution centers have "solved" the food-distribution question.

However, currently there are people now calling for all schools to open as normal. Decrees and mandates to this effect are being issued from the highest towers of power. This time the arguments flow around economics, logistics, and child-care. For our society to function, people need to go back to work. For people to go back to work, their children need to be occupied. Through this lens, a primary function of schools is to occupy children, i.e., provide daycare and distraction for children while their adult parents toil to increase our GDP.

Although food-distribution and daycare both might be components of a modern school, neither is related to why I teach. Also, neither argument acknowl-

edges that we are in the middle of a pandemic, which, of course, is the stinking giant dead elephant in the room: to open schools again endangers senior staff and everyone's loved ones.

So why do we teach? If it is for the betterment of society, then ignoring real health risks that will incur actual suffering and loss, just to cling to past normalcy, is not the path forward. BPS has already solved the food-distribution question. Remote learning, while inferior to that in the classroom, does have the potential to impart some skills and therefore occupy the students' attention. We need to acknowledge current realities. And we really need to examine our fundamental drivers.

Nothing should be left off the table, even a sacred cow like the question of universal education itself. I have known parents who have discovered that remote learning and home-schooling is actually better for their child than when the traditional setting existed. When this is over, those parents will demand continuation of these successful approaches. That child and those parents should have those options.

For now, I am comfortable with remote learning. I am serving my primary function of imparting my curriculum while keeping myself and my household safe. True, I would fight tooth and nail for my students, but this is different. They aren't in danger. The risk is mine and on my loved ones at home. If I were called in before a vaccine is in my veins, I'm afraid

I would be forced to use my accrued sick-days to safeguard myself and loved ones. Honestly, I see no other choice: during quarantine I have re-learned the true value of my loved ones. How can I now cast that aside and endanger those closest to me?

Besides, with the whole world working on a vaccine, it shouldn't be much longer before a viable and effective vaccine is produced. Companies around the world are claiming successes, soon such claims should lead to tangible solutions. Therefore, to me, the only ethical choice is to continue social-distancing until a vaccine is distributed. Choosing compassion over profit is an important ideal I believe we should actively model for our students.

Answers may differ. I still believe that education's goal is to make our students better, more compassionate, and happier adults than had they lived in unenlightened ignorance. Students learn more from actions than verbal spin. Science tells us that covid-19 thrives and spreads well in high-density, poorly ventilated, small rooms, where lots of different people are talking. To open schools now means to actively ignore the Science surrounding the issue. What kind of role-modelling lesson are we giving kids when those in power insist on ignoring science, ignoring ethics, and ignoring suffering over money? Is this not just formalized universal ignorance?

(Paul Eaton teaches physics and chemistry at Boston Latin Academy)

Remembering the Delayed Liberation of Black People in America, Advocating for Black Lives, and a Call for the End of Systemic Racism in America

by Joel Richards

(From a speech Joel Richards made in Dorchester commemorating Juneteenth)

Why Are We Here?

Let's be honest, we shouldn't be here. In 1865 when the Union soldiers showed up in Texas and announced the end of the Civil War, that should have been the end of terrorism and slavery for black people. We should have been emancipated, however systemic white supremacy took new forms, under the new names of apprenticeship programs, prisoner loan out, and lynching. Black people in the spirit of Juneteenth advocated, marched and in the end overcame that form of slavery and oppressions.

Then other forms of systemic racial

control were born: Jim Crow laws and the "separate but equal" Supreme Court ruling. Separate but equal was code for oppressed and vulnerable. It was code for sitting in the back of the bus or giving up your seat, 2nd class citizenship, voter suppression, or the inability to enter public buildings or colleges.

In the spirit of Juneteenth – even though we were not allowed in courtrooms, or colleges, or board rooms – we overcame that and passed legislation protecting us from the systemic rage of white supremacy. It was 1983 before white and black workers were paid equally in the White House. As progress was made a new code words for systemic oppressions were created, super predators and the war on drugs. These were codes for mass

incarceration, choke holds, no knock warrants, and "I had to shoot I feared for my life."

The destruction of our communities have many code words: redlining, gerrymandering, imminent domain, vagrancy statutes, mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines, loss of voting rights due to felony convictions, 3 strike laws, shit whole countries.

I ask how has nobody ever thought instead of more police let's split the schools in half and send more teachers to better serve, and educate? Instead of more police, what about more scholarships for college? Instead of more police, what about more jobs and better economic investment in home ownership?

Why are we here after 400 years? The



Joel Richards

whole world has finally spoken and have said enough is enough! No more code names, no more systemic racism, no more systems of control. Give black people the country they deserved in 1868.



BTU Members Join March on Washington 2020

BTU member Vanessa Laroque organized a bus, filled with a handful of teens, a number of local labor unionists including several BTU members to attend the August March on Washington. It was a moving and historical event filled with many teachable moments for the young adults. Various leaders: Denise Berkeley, Retired Teacher and Union member, Mothers Against Violence; Carla Ramsey, SEI members, School students from Brookline High, Brighton High, and Adm. Sonie Felix of Charlestown High.



BPS/BTU NBCT Leadership Team

Interviewed by Margaret Arlauskas, BPS/BTU National Board Leadership Team

With Benadette Manning, NBCT

Where Do You Teach in BPS? What Subject Do You Teach?

I teach at Boston Day and Evening Academy Pilot program. This program is a small school of only 8 staff and 60 males of color who have traditionally struggled with finishing high school. My students are very capable but did not buy into the pedagogy of traditional schooling. I have to be creative, reflective and open minded. I teach mathematics, physical computing (MicroBits and Lego Robotics), and I am an advisor.

What is Your Certificate Area? When Did You Certify?

I am certified in Adolescence and Young Adult (AYA) Mathematics 9-12. I originally certified in 1998 and renewed twice 2008 and 2019.

What Inspired You to Become a NBCT?

I started late in my teaching career as previously I owned a greeting card business and was an accountant. I started teaching English in a Houston Catholic school to middle schools. It was in a rude awakening of how professional and "human" I needed to be at the same time. NBCT was the professional development that I needed to help me learn how to become an effective teacher.

How Has Becoming a NBCT Helped Your Teaching Profession?

A few years after becoming a NBCT I was hired as a dean of a large comprehensive school in another district. I was told that being a NBCT helped me attain that job. In the teaching profession educators respect the National Board.

Can You Explain Now This Process Has Made a Positive Impact on Student Learning?

I believe that one of the most important aspects of teaching is to communicate and reflect with self, with students, and with families. To that end, as a NBCT, I learned how to question my pedagogy and curriculum by asking myself, "Am I teaching this subject in the most effective way for all of my students?" I also learned that all families care deeply about their children. I ask families, "What can I do to help your child and your family?" I ask students, "What did you think of the last unit we studied?" and "What went well? What did not go well? How would you change it?" The answers I received have resulted in big changes to my curriculum units and my pedagogy.

Given that there are 53,000 Students in BPS and the Majority of Them are Students of Color, Do You Think it is Important That Teachers of Color are More Represented in the Boston National Board Than They are Currently? If so, What Do You Think We Should Do to Get More TOC to Earn Their NBCT?

I think that there should be more representation of teachers of color in BPS because many children of color are not learning enough about themselves, there is little education about the issues in their communities, there is very little to no anti-racism work with students and within teacher ranks. Many schools in Boston are run by white principals with little successful experience in urban schools. We could use NBCT's to lead schools or to be respected teacher-

With Cristina De Guzman, NBCT

Where Do You Teach in BPS? What Subject Do You Teach?

I teach at The English High School English Language Arts (ELA). I've taught remedial reading for 9th through AP.

What is Your Certificate Area? When Did You Certify?

I earned my National Board certificate area in ELA/Adolescence and Young Adulthood in 2018. I also hold MA DESE licenses in French and ESL. I certified over 20 years ago in ELA and French and added ESL and Special Ed 7-10 years ago.

What Inspired You to Become a NBCT?

I wanted career advancement. I already have 2 advanced degrees, and didn't want more online classes where I didn't learn anything. I also wanted potential opportunities for leadership.

How Has Becoming a NBCT Helped Your Teaching Profession?

The process not only forced timely, immediately applicable reflection on practice (unlike a lot of PD or courses which are often disconnected from day to day practice and student needs) - it also enabled the opportunity to do this in depth reflection and improvement with colleagues - the collaborative component of the work cannot be understated.

Often as a veteran teacher, I am last on the list of faculty to be pushed to improve. It's simply a matter of numbers - when you have several teachers on your

leaders in their schools. Finally we need more students of color to join the teaching ranks and they will do that when they see more people like them teaching.

What we need to do to get more teachers of color to earn their NBCT is to talk it up because many teachers do not know much, if anything, about the national board. I believe that more teachers would earn their NBCT if they knew about it.

Any Helpful Information You Would Like to Share With Aspiring NBCT Candidates in BPS?

I feel that many people are intimidated by the national board process and they should not be. It is very doable with support and it ultimately does not cost anything-- you can't say that for a Ph.D. program or additional masters credits. In 21 years I have earned approximately \$90,000 additional pay (retirement eligible) for being a NBCT and I paid \$0 for the certifications and two renewals!



Benadette Manning, NBCT

Know that there is a lot of support for candidates though the national website, the BPS/BTU Leadership Team, and the local cohort the candidates choose to join.

Do You Want to Help BPS Candidates Through the National Board Process?

Yes! I have been supporting candidates for the last 21 years! I am on the BPS/BTU National Board Leadership Team.

staff of 3 or fewer years, you have to focus on them. You have to put the needs of the students first, and so you need to focus on the teachers who have the greenest skills. The NB process enabled me the opportunity and impetus to push and not simply rely on the skill level I had already attained. As a veteran teacher, I am pushed into positions as lead, mentor, new teacher developer but find it at the price of not pushing myself. National Board helped me to focus on my teaching practice.

Can You Explain Now This Process Has Made a Positive Impact on Student Learning?

In some ways, it just helped them because they all knew I was doing it - it showed them that learning and improving is a constant process - that 'good' teachers are ones who keep trying to get better. It also forced me to pause and reflect on HOW I was teaching and how I knew kids were learning skills they could apply independently. The process enabled me to look at current research/techniques. It gave me new learning about the content and different ways to teach the content. I learned new research on how to teach literacy skills effectively to my students who are underserved with interrupted and intermittent education. It was personalized professional development which allowed me to personalize my practice.

Given that there are 53,000 Students in BPS and the Majority of Them are Students of Color, Do You Think it is Important That Teachers of Color are More Represented in the Boston National Board Than They are Currently? If so, What Do You Think We Should Do to Get More TOC to Earn Their NBCT?

Yes. The reality is that our faculty has gaps just as any organization. However, it is insufficient simply to acknowledge gaps; you have to address them. One of the glaring gaps in BPS is a dearth of teachers of color. Given that, it is imperative not only that BPS address this shortage, but also that we support and encourage those teachers of color already within the district to become the most effective teachers possible. NB is an excellent way to do this. It affords teachers of color the chance not only to improve their craft, but to create strong professional relation-



Cristina De Guzman, NBCT

ships with their colleagues within their schools and throughout the NB community. It also creates a pathway to leadership while remaining in the classroom; a sorely needed element within the profession.

Any Helpful Information You Would Like to Share With Aspiring NBCT Candidates in BPS?

Don't do everything I did! I did all 4 components in one academic year. It was overwhelming and basically meant that's all I worked on for February and April breaks. Take the time afforded to you.

However, some things I did that were integral not only to passing but also to enjoying it and learning...

Have a team. Ideally you want a team within your school, but certainly if not in your school, then in other schools, a team who are working together.

Collect multiple versions for each element along the way, the lesson you think will work, inevitably won't.

The video part is hard. Not because it's hard to be on camera - but because it's incredibly difficult to get the video you need. Part of it is technical - needing someone to record you, getting the sound right, figuring out which section to use, then formatting it to fit the requirements in order to upload it to the e-portfolio system...it's crazy! But it's also that the lesson you thought would highlight a certain part of your practice ends up showing you how much you need to adjust your practice. And you have to revise and teach whole new lessons (that are actually better).

Use the resources around you. Your colleagues, other NB teachers within the district, your evaluator...anyone who knows about strong pedagogy, effective writing, and who is willing to read pages and pages all about you.

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Special Needs Art Educator of the Year

Christopher Hall,
Joseph Lee K-8 School

The Massachusetts Art Education Association (MAEA) announces the recipients of the 2021 MAEA Awards. The 2021 MAEA Awards Ceremony will not be held this year, but award winners will be celebrated and honored at the 2021 awards ceremony in November 2021.

An affiliate of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) since 1975, MAEA is Massachusetts' professional association for art educators. The mission of MAEA is to advance high quality visual arts education throughout the state by empowering art educators to excel in the practice, instruction, promotion, and celebration of visual art. Recipients exemplify highly qualified individuals active in the field of art education today: leaders, educators, students, scholars, researchers, and advocates who make significant contributions to the profession.

Statement of AFT President Randi Weingarten on the Life and Legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

American Federation of Teachers President **Randi Weingarten** issued the following statement in response to the news of the death of Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**:

"Justice Ginsburg is an icon. She leaves behind a legacy as a brilliant, hardworking jurist and a trailblazing feminist; her loss is incalculable. Long before she became notorious, she broke barriers most never even dreamed to approach. Her unfailing sense of justice reminded us of its awesome power, and her unbending sense of duty reminded us to remain committed to protecting our democracy, our Constitution and the rule of law. But it was her personal courage and resilience, especially in the face of illness, that reminded us just how much strength one single person can have.

"The best way to honor Justice Ginsburg is to cherish the justice she pursued and to honor her final wish to wait until the next president is inaugurated before considering her replacement."



BPS/BTU NBCT Leadership Team...

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Do You Want to Help BPS Candidates Through the National Board Process?

Definitely – I would like to both informally/ formally support teacher candidates at my school through the process. I believe it makes people better educators at the class level and collaboratively in school or across schools in your certifi-

cate area. It increases collective capacity. It is a lot of work but I feel confident in my work to support colleagues.

If you are interested in attaining your National Board certification, please contact the BPS/BPS NBCT LT by emailing nationalboard@bostonpublicschools.org. You can also visit our website bit.ly/2019nbctl or announcements check us out on Twitter [@BostonNbct](https://twitter.com/BostonNbct)



Latin Academy teacher Michael Maguire welcomes his students to the first day of classes - virtually.

Retired Teachers Chapter Marilyn Marion, RTC Chair & Joan Devlin, RTC Secretary RTC Holds Virtual Business Meeting

September 17, 2020 marked another first in this year of pandemic firsts. Rather than simply cancel the Fall Business meeting, the Retired Teachers Chapter held its very first Zoom business meeting.

Over 50 members participated in the meeting, sharing experiences during this year including their participating in BTU actions, political activities and keeping in touch with friends and colleagues while social distancing and isolation.

State and Federal Legislative Update

Shaun Duhamel, CEO of the Massachusetts Retirees, was the first speaker. He updated the membership on what is happening at both the state and federal level that affects us.

Duhamel praised **Charlie Johnson** for his work representing retirees on the joint union committee negotiating health benefits for Boston Retirees. He also urged members to vote for the two union representatives on the Boston Retirement Board **Michael McLaughlin** of the BTU and **Michael O'Reilly** of the Boston Firefighters local 718. He said both members demonstrate their knowledge and dedication to the retired union members across the City.

Mass Retirees filed legislation that tries to improve the current COLA base issues faced by the State Teachers Retirement systems. As redrafted, S2798, the Senior COLA Enhancement contains the following key features: With each Basic COLA increase, an additional annual COLA benefit of \$100 would be paid to retirees who satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- Former career employees with at least 20 years of creditable service, retired for at least 15 years, and receiving a pension amount less than the average pension being paid by the retirement system. Once retired for 20 years, the additional annual benefit for these "eligible" retirees

would be increased to \$200 annually with each Basic COLA increase. Surviving spouses would be eligible if the deceased retiree would otherwise be eligible. Enhanced benefit becomes a permanent part of the pension allowance. If enacted, the Enhanced benefit becomes automatic for the State/Teachers' Systems and under a Local Option provision, must be accepted by local retirement boards and their respective legislative body.

Larry Connolly, Co-Chair of the RTC Legislative Committee noted that the RTC developed a similar proposal for the City of Boston, but it had a much higher impact on BTU Teacher Retirees. Duhamel acknowledged the problem of not including Boston teacher retirees, but pointed out that thousands of other participants in the State Teacher Retirement system would benefit. Boston has a higher average benefit level than the state average.

At the federal level, efforts to change the Windfall Elimination Provision continue. Duhamel noted that the BTU/RTC had been very helpful in bringing other states into the fight to get WEP changed, but more are needed. While this legislation will not eliminate WEP and completely restore all social security money, it will begin to restore some money to people who lost social security due to this provision. Congressman Neal wants to tie the WEP legislation to a larger bill to help insure its passage.

The RTC Legislative Committee agreed that we would continue to work cooperatively with the Mass Retirees in seeking legislation that benefits all retirees.

Information and a Warning

The second presentation concerned the health benefits that we receive. **Barbara Deveau**, Director of the City of Boston's Health and Insurance Division covered general information about Medicare and warned that marketers selling other supplemental plans could cause you to lose your group coverage.

Applying for Medicare before your 65th birthday is required. If you are eligible you must take Medicare Part A, B and D coverage. If you are not eligible you may stay on your non-Medicare plan. You can receive help from this division to apply for Medicare.

The base price for Medicare Part B is \$144.60. If you have a higher income, then you pay according to a schedule that is based on the amount you earned from your tax filing from two years ago. The City reimburses 50% of your cost for Part B. If you paid more because you had a higher part B payment, you can file the form you receive from Social Security showing your payment for Part B, and the City reimburses 50% of that amount.

Medicare supplement plans offered by the city vary in how Part D drug costs are paid. In some plans the price of drugs is included in the plan. Harvard Pilgrim recently changed its plan to Silver Scripts for drug coverage and the result was an increase in the price of the Harvard Pilgrim plan.

Members were warned about the confusion created by marketing companies for supplemental Medicare plans. Medicare open enrollment occurs from October-December. This is not for the City of Boston retirees. Many of these plans offer things like eyeglasses or rides to medical appointments included in the cost of these plans. But here's the catch. You can only be covered by one Medicare plan. If you choose a supplemental coverage outside of the City's plan you lose your coverage and become responsible for the total cost. You have the freedom to elect other coverages but they cannot compete with the benefits and cost of the City's group plan.

Marianna Gill of the city's Health and Insurance Division shared with members that while the negotiations maintained the plans that are now in effect, the City can seek to narrow down plans or choose a different plan depending on

the outcome of the proposed merger of the Tufts and Harvard Pilgrim plans.

If you move you need to notify the Health and Insurance Division of your new information. Departments do not share this information. You should notify the Boston Retirement Board, The Health and Insurance Division and the Retired Teacher Chapter of the BTU.

Reminder for Recent Retirees

For some, this pandemic has caused teachers and paraprofessionals to rethink retirement plans. The difficulties presented by the virus coupled with the ever-evolving plans to reopen or not reopen, remote or in person teaching, and having underlying conditions that make you vulnerable have combined to force difficult decisions.

Newly-retired Teachers and Paraprofessionals are reminded that you must apply for membership in the BTU's Retired Teacher Chapter. Also new retirees should apply for COBRA through Health and Welfare to extend dental and eyeglass benefits for 2 years.

Explore the benefits that are available only to RTC members. After COBRA ends you can apply for dental insurance, discounts on eyeglasses from the Eye Care Center, discounts on hearing aids through HEAR USA. Visit the RTC section of the website: <https://www.btu.org/retirees.org>.

Keep in touch with colleagues, participate in activities, enjoy our travel opportunities (when we get to travel again), keep engaged in BTU events and activities. You can download an application from the website <https://www.btu.org/retirees.org> or contact the BTU office and request an application be mailed to you. Please include your City of Boston retirement number (from your pension check) on your application and return it to the RTC at the BTU office.

We hope that you are all doing well and that we see you again soon.

Politics in Education Johnny McInnis Campaigning with the BTU

The Boston Teachers Union endorses candidates for elected offices. Members often ask about the process we use to endorse candidates. Here's what happens:

Every two years there is an election process for Boston City elected offices. We engage in endorsing candidates for Boston City Council and we have endorsed

candidates who campaign for Mayor, who's election cycle is every four years. The following year we engage in endorsing candidates for Massachusetts state legislative offices. This election also occurs every two years. Candidates for state offices campaign for re-election if they are an incumbent or to be newly elected if a candidate is challenging an incumbent or campaigning for an open seat for an elected office.

During the election cycle, both incumbents (those who are currently in office) and new candidates will reach out to the Boston Teachers Union, requesting an endorsement. The BTU responds to this request by sending a questionnaire with issues that are important to our members. After a completed questionnaire is returned, the COPE committee (Committee on Political Education) will review it to decide if the candidate should be interviewed for a recommendation to the executive board (also known as the E-Board). The decision to make a recommendation to the E-Board is made by a 2/3 vote by the COPE Committee members. Next, the E-Board receives the recommendation and reviews information about the candidates. A vote is then held by the E-Board members to decide whether the candidate should be recommended to the membership. Again a 2/3 vote is required. Lastly, a vote is held at BTU monthly membership meetings during which members have the chance to approve or oppose candidates. A 2/3 vote is again required to pass.

Once the BTU endorsement is approved through this process, the true work begins. The Political Director will contact the candidates to discuss their campaign. The BTU will hold member-to-member phone banks on behalf of the candidate, allowing members the opportunity to get involved with the campaign of an endorsed candidate.

If any members are interested in assisting with phone banking, they can contact the Political Director for this stipend opportunity. Members can also volunteer to support a campaign by door knocking and handing out flyers. Unfortunately during COVID, campaigns have not been able to reach constituents by holding gatherings or other types of in-person events. Candidates have had to resort to online events to talk about their campaigns and fundraising. Some candidates have chosen to leave door hangers with information about their campaign and talk to constituents socially distanced when encountered at the doors.

BEAT (BTU Electoral Action Team) is the group we use to engage our members in the election process. Ideally, we like to have at least five members from each school on this team. They have an opportunity to participate with how we interact with candidates both during and after elections. Because even after a candidate is elected, it is still important to make sure they are supporting what matters. When participating with any political action, members are requested to do so only outside of school hours. If you are interested in participating with the BEAT please contact Political Director, **Johnny McInnis** at jmcinnis@btu.org or Political Organizer, **Roberto Jimenez** at rjimenez@btu.org.

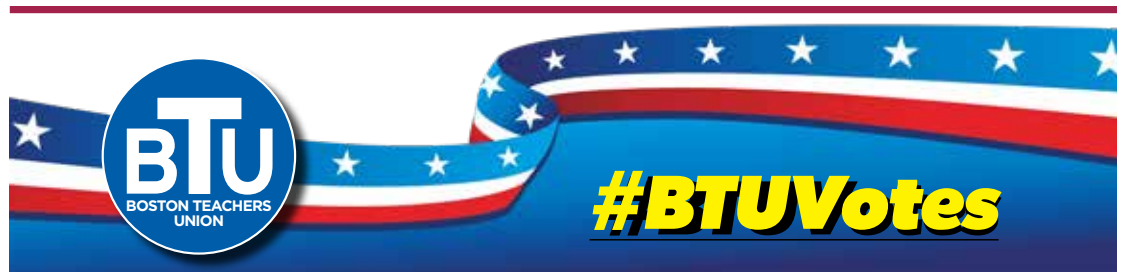
Voting for candidates has changed this past election cycle. The September Primary saw more people voting statewide in many years. There were three ways to vote: mail in ballot, early voting or in person. The same thing will be true for the November election. If you choose to vote by mail, you can request a ballot by going to the Secretary of State website for an application. Once you receive your ballot, members are encouraged by the BTU to mail it back as soon as possible. This is important because if your ballot is not received prior to election day it will not be counted. Early voting occurs at designated locations around the state within your municipal city.

#BTUVotes began to encourage BTU members to vote in every election. All elections are important including those that do not occur during the regular election cycle (for example if a seat is vacated by an elected official). Primary elections are important when multiple candidates of the same party are campaigning for the same elected position. After the Primary, the official November election will take place. This November we will vote on who will be President of the United States. BTU members are encouraged to take a photo when they vote and upload it on their social media account using the **#BTUVotes**. No matter which process you choose to vote, upload your photo to support the importance of voting.

If you would like more information or would like to help with anything mentioned in this article please, please contact Political Director, **Johnny McInnis** at jmcinnis@btu.org or Political Organizer, **Roberto Jimenez** at rjimenez@btu.org.



Johnny McInnis
BTU Political Director



BTU Endorsed Candidates

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden

U.S. VICE PRESIDENT

Kamala Harris

U.S. SENATOR – MASSACHUSETTS

Edward Markey

U.S. CONGRESS – MASSACHUSETTS

MA 2nd Congressional - James McGovern

MA 3rd Congressional - Lori Trahan

MA 5th Congressional - Katherine Clark

MA 7th Congressional - Ayanna Pressley

MA 9th Congressional - William Keating

MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATE INCUMBENTS

State Senator Julian Cyr, Cape and Islands

State Senator Patricia Jehlen, Second Middlesex

State Senator Mike Brady, Second Plymouth and Bristol

State Senator Marc Pacheco, First Plymouth and Bristol

State Senator Patrick O'Connor, Plymouth and Norfolk

State Senator Nick Collins, First Suffolk

State Senator Rebecca Rausch, Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex

State Senator Karen Spilka, Second Middlesex and Norfolk

State Senator Walter Timilty, Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INCUMBENTS

State Representative Thomas Vitolo, 15th Norfolk

State Representative Thomas Stanley, 9th Middlesex

State Representative Christine Barber, 34th Middlesex

State Representative Liz Miranda, 5th Suffolk

State Representative Jon Santiago, 9th Suffolk

State Representative Nika Elugardo, 15th Suffolk

State Representative Kevin Honan, 17th Suffolk

State Representative David Rogers, 24th Middlesex

State Representative Daniel Ryan, 2nd Suffolk

NON-INCUMBENTS FOR MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Erika Uytterhoeven, 27th Middlesex

Brandy Fluker-Oakley, 12th Suffolk

Rob Consalvo, 14th Suffolk

Emmanuel Dockter, 5th Plymouth

Vote Yes on 2 – Ranked Choice Voting

YES on 2 began as a grassroots-driven movement to build awareness around an improvement to our elections known as **Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)**. RCV helps reduce the issues of vote-splitting and so-called “spoiler” candidates -- common problems which often put pressure on candidates to drop out, and which prevent fresh, diverse voices from running for office in the first place.

RCV levels the playing field -- giving **more choice**, and guaranteeing a **stronger voice** for every voter. It eliminates worries about casting a “wasted” vote, regardless of whether or not your favorite candidate is deemed the most “electable,” or whether they have the biggest bank account, or whether they drop out before election day after you’ve voted early. RCV encourages candidates to run **more positive and issue-based campaigns**, and it ensures that candidates win with **over 50% support** from their district. For a short 1-minute primer on how RCV works, check out the video on the **YES on 2** website. (yeson2rcv.com)

This year, **YES on 2** volunteers certified **128,780 signatures** with the Secretary of the Commonwealth, placing Ranked Choice Voting on the **November 3, 2020 ballot**. Now, with only a handful of weeks left, each of us must answer the call to get this initiative over the finish line.

Here's another example of an election which really could have used Ranked Choice Voting. This is the democratic primary from the 3rd Congressional District.

There were so many candidates in this race that the winner received only 22% support. **Lori Trahan** is now one of the biggest advocates in congress for RCV because she was in this crazy 10-way race.

The 1st and 2nd place finishers were separated by only 137 votes. Now imagine you were a voter for one of the underdog candidates and it came down to such a close race between the top 2. If you voted for any of the other 8 candidates, you didn't get a say at all.

How RCV Helps

With RCV, voters get backup choices. If you supported an underdog candidate and they were eliminated, your vote would count for your 2nd choice instead. Your vote can never be wasted and your voice is always heard.

