

# 2020

## Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)



### The future of RI politics? A more-diverse General Assembly

‘What we are witnessing is the mainstreaming of Black and brown communities across this country,’ one activist says.

Tomas Avila

Milenio Latino Institute

11/4/2020

## Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)

Tomás Ávila  
November 4, 2020

Back on February 2019, I decided to publish a collage once again about women in politics during Women History Month in March, and International Women Day, on March 8, and decided to make it about minority elected women. In preparation for such collage, I decided to write an email to the librarian at the State Library, in the statehouse under the auspices of the Secretary of State, and also decided that instead of just asking about elected women in particular, I requested request information about all minorities who have been elected across the state throughout the years to state offices with the plan to start building a minority elected officials database from the data I was hoping to receive.

I received the response from the librarian, acknowledging receiving my request, and requesting some clarification “Do you want all minorities, or are there particular groups you're interested in (for example: people of color; women; LGBTQ community; a combination of these; etc.)? Based on the resources we have, I can only identify visually, and therefore I cannot identify religious or LGBTQ minority groups. We have the Rhode Island Owners Manuals which have Rhode Island's elected officials' photos from 1991 through present. We have a book of women elected officials from 1922--1992, but we do not have anything highlighting other elected officials who are part minority groups. Any additional information you can provide would be greatly appreciated. I will do as much as I can on your behalf and reach out to the State Archives once I hit a wall.

I responded that I was interested in minority people of color elected officials, black and Latinos. That was my interests, because that is where I focus my research and documentation over the past twenty-five years, and after a few email exchanges regarding the clarification about the context of what information I requested, I received the following response from the librarian, “Great, thank you for the clarification. We are working on this for you now.”

A week after I received the following response “*As I began looking into your question regarding who have been all the people of color and minority elected in Rhode Island, I realized that I cannot accurately answer it. I can tell you that Rev. Mahlon van Horne was the first African American elected to the General Assembly in 1885.*”

*I recommend contacting the House and Senate to see if they are able to give you a list of the members of the Black and Latino Caucus. The Speaker of the House's office phone is 401-222-2466. I am more than happy to help you conduct research on this question with our resources. We do have the RI Owners' Manuals that do have black-and-white photos of elected officials dating back to 1991, which you are welcome to use in the library. We also have an index of all elected officials from 1879 through 1989 to get names of individuals, which can give you a list of names to research. The extent of our biographic information on elected officials is what is included in the Government Owner's Manual. The Rhode Island Historical Society and the Black Heritage Society both might have additional resources that would help figure out who identified/identifies as a minority, person of color, or Latino/a.*

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*I am more than happy to assist you in your research process, but I cannot accurately answer your question. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or if you would like to set-up a time to come into the library to work with our resources. We don't require appointments, but this is a busy time of year. I'd hate for you to show up to do research, but there's a press conference in the library or something of the like."*

To which I responded Thank you for your assistance, and your extensive research and explanation about the lack of a catalogue of Minority Elected Officials, validating my reasoning to develop such document, and greatly appreciate your willingness to collaborate in this process. Regarding the manuals mentioned, are they available in digital format? That would be extremely helpful and more efficient process, but if not, available I will proceed with a visit to the library soon. After receiving confirmation that "we do not have the software necessary to do so on our computer I responded "Thank for your assistance I plan to visit the library Monday the at about 10:00 AM.

As agreed on Monday I visited the State Library at the State House and after a brief introduction with the Librarian, she took me to where the manuals were located and I proceeded go through each individual manual reviewing each individual page searching for state minority elected officials, and as I found them I would scanned them into my iPhone and by the time I finished, I had about 35 minority elected officials across the state of Rhode Island, from Mahlon Van Horne elected in 1885, follow by George Castro 134 year after in 1980 and forward into the present.

Legislative District	City/Town Represented	Title	First Name	MI	Last Name	Party	Affiliated	Elect	Year/Ethnic
1	Neponset	Representative	Mahlon		Van Horne	Democrat		1885	AA
20	Providence	Representative	George	A	Castro	Democrat		1980	AA
3	Providence	Senator	Charles	A	Varon	Democrat		1982	AA
46	North Kingstown	Representative	John	S	Hernandez	Democrat		1982	AA
11	Providence	Representative	Harold	M	Ricks	Democrat		1984	AA
3	Providence	Representative	Paul		Pickman	Democrat		1986	AA
83	East Providence	Representative	George	S	Lima	Democrat		1988	AA
38	Providence	Representative	Joseph	F	Newsome	Democrat		1988	AA
83	East Providence	Representative	Maria	J	Lopez	Democrat		1988	AA
18	Providence	Senator	Harold	M	Dietz	Democrat		1988	AA
46	North Kingstown	Representative	Melvin	J	Rossign	Democrat		1980	AA
9	Providence	Representative	Anastasia	P	Williams	Democrat		1982	AA
5	Providence	Representative	Gordon		Fox	Democrat		1982	AA
17	Providence	Representative	Maria	C	Foss	Republican		1982	AA
18	Providence	Representative	Idarsha	E	Casperer	Democrat		1984	AA
12	Providence	Representative	Joseph	S	Almeida	Democrat		1989	AA
12	Providence	Representative	Luis	F	Tejada	Democrat		2000	AA
12	Providence	Representative	Stella	V	Abadia	Democrat		2000	AA
62	Woonsocket	Representative	Stella		Guerra	Democrat		2001	HIS
2	Providence	Senator	Juan	M	Pichardo	Democrat		2002	HIS
6	Providence	Senator	Harold	M	Roby	Democrat		2004	AA
11	Providence	Representative	Grace		Diaz	Democrat		2004	HIS
6	North Providence, Providence	Representative	Raymond	A	Heal	Democrat		2000	AA
73	Midletown, Neponset	Representative	Marylin	L	Abney	Democrat		2002	AA
12	Providence	Representative	Leonidas		Medina	Democrat		2002	HIS
56	Central Falls	Representative	Stella		Maldonado	Democrat		2004	HIS
58	Pawtucket	Representative	Carlos	E	Tobon	Democrat		2004	AA
58	Pawtucket	Representative	Sean		Phillips	Democrat		2004	AA
5	Providence	Representative	Maria		Baron-Vassé	Democrat		2006	AA
18	Providence	Senator	Ana	B	Quezada	Democrat		2008	HIS
9	Pawtucket	Senator	Sandra		Cano	Democrat		2008	HIS
60	Pawtucket	Representative	Karen		Albate	Democrat		2008	HIS
13	Johnston, Providence	Representative	Mario	F	Chamber	Democrat		2008	HIS
88	Barrington, East Providence	Representative	Laura	M	Cassat	Democrat		2008	AA

After I cleaned the collected data I proceeded to share an excel sheet containing the names of the RIMEO Officials I was able to identify during my visit to the library for their information and the first draft of my catalogue <https://issuu.com/milenioassociates/docs/ri-blcaucus-2019/s/74842>, and hope we can partner to make it part of the state library once is completed, to share with future researches for the same information and future generations. FYI, I have the information of all present 17 present elected officials from the Legislature website. Looking forward to your continue valuable assistance with this project, and the eventual inclusion in the State Library records for future generations.

During the same period, I proceeded to call the City of Providence archivist asking the same question and requested the same information about municipal minority elected officials, taking into account that back in 2016 I had attended the City Of Providence "Trailblazers: An Exhibit Celebrating First African American Leaders in State and Local Government" (See photos) curated by the archive department, and the Providence City Council, but received the same answer that they didn't have a document of African Americans or Latino elected officials, all they could share with me, was some of the information that they had presented and suggested to check with the state archive, which I had checked with and received the same answer from the Speaker of the House office and the President of the Senate, and none of them had any documentation about the

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minority elected officials and I decided to proceed on with my first project, a collage of nine state elected African American and Latina Women (See picture) .

I also shared the collage with the state librarian at the statehouse along with other information I mentioned earlier as well as with the city of Providence, which I also share with the city of Providence Archivist. Needless to say such experiences were discouraging but at the same time made me aware of the lack of information regarding minority elected officials who have been served the state, since the 1800s, and I decided to compile a document to share with the state population through social media memorializing such valuable public servants

and ended up with a document of about 200 pages continued my research even farther than the particular places that I had visited researching through the internet and found more information, that I included in the document that I did and I entitled it, Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO), and I published it through social media and among the elected officials and my networks.

This year, 2020, when I did my research and compilation, I concluded that very much for the past 20 years we have been electing Latinos to offices, both state and municipal level in a very consistent fashion and I decided to celebrate the 20th anniversary of that success of “Latinos Growing Into Power” as described by Miren Uriarte, in *Latinos in New England: Growing into Power in Rhode Island*, Miren Uriar, Chapter 5, pp 125-147 through 13 community conversations with different leaders who had participated in the empowerment of the Latino community with me and many diverse partners, that was very enlightening. And so when I did my compilation for the elected officials so running for office into 2020 and empowering and as I’ve done for the past 25 years, I’ve collected the names of candidates that have registered their intent to run for elected office during the September 8, 2020 Rhode Island Primary Elections, and as in the past it’s telling me that in the next 20 years Rhode Island’s State House and Municipal governments will be turning Black & Brown. With approximately 80 candidates seeking elected office from United State Senator to district committees, and the expansion of the districts through thirteen of thirty nice cities and towns (Barrington, Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Newport, Pawtucket, Portsmouth, Providence, Smithfield, Warwick, West Warwick, Woonsocket) across the state from the traditional urban core, change is definitely coming to the Rhode Island Political scene within the next twenty years.

That conclusion, produce the interests of the Boston globe’s Ed Fitzpatrick to write an article, regarding the large number of minority elected officials seeking reelection and first time candidates seeking elected office across Rhode Island, as well as my prediction about the future of this state legislation becoming more diverse starting with this year’s election which was validated correct

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by the election of 21 minorities to the state house, the largest number in Rhode Island history as well as the election of 19 municipal candidates as Mayor, City/Town Councilors, School Committees and Rep David Morales the youngest Latinx elected to the state Legislature in Rhode Island and the country, Rep. Brianna Henries (D-64), the first Native American, African-American, Cape Verdean descent elected, Rep Anastasia Williams (D-9), longest serving Black/Latina Legislator in State's history, Senator Tiara Mack first Black queer woman elected to the legislature, Rep Nathan Biah, first African elected to the state Legislature, Councilwoman Aniece Germain made history as she became the first black woman elected to the Cranston City council, becoming the first time the City of Cranston two Minority Elected officials after the largest number of 4 seeking elected positions.

During this period I also published a collage of all the minorities who were seeking office, in the upcoming Presidential, Rhode Island Statewide election at the state and municipal level, which produced a phone call from a Representative Anastasia William, Providence District 9 inquiring about the collage, and I proceeded to inform her that it was something I have been doing for the last 25 years during the electoral cycles which started with keeping track of Latino elected officials since she was the first and only elected Latin, to the present where there are a total 24 elected Latinos across the state, and this year I have included the Black candidates and named it the Black and Brown Leadership 2020-2040 Initiative, as I titled the collage, and my document capturing my research findings. I also explained to her my experience with the State Library last year with the lack of formal documentation about the growing Black and Brown electoral experience. Rep Williams informed me that she was so surprised that I wasn't able to obtain the information I requested because she had tried the same thing and was not able to obtain it as well and informed her that I had started my own 200 pages documentation "***Rhode Island Minority Elected Officials (RIMEO)***" that includes Legislative, Municipal and historical information.

During my conversation with Rep William I said to her, I need your help and support to transform the information I have gathered into an official document that can serve our next generation and document the biographies of many Black and Brown Public Servants whose history has not been curated, preserved and published, and if you help me accomplish that, I will publish this document, in both our name and give you full and equal credit for your partnership in making it a reality the publication that's going to come out. We agreed and she requested to give her time to find out what she needed to do from the legislature, the Secretary of State and the Board of Elections because they are all responsible of the electoral process, where should it be placed and distributed and then she would get back to me. On October 14, Representative Williams sent me an email containing a draft of the "Elected and Appointed Minority Official Commission" *The purpose of the commission shall be to establish a permanent record of state and municipal elected and appointed minority officials holding executive, legislative, or judicial office, from the founding of this state's original settlement by Roger Williams in 1636 to the present. The records shall state the name, position and period of elected or appointed service of each minority official,* and the body content "Please review the attached legislation and let me know what your thoughts are right away. Please put any changes you may see needing to be made in writing indicating the exact detailed area of such change. Please let me know right away that you have received this email and its attachment" and after reading it I responded "I have read it and find it very complete and in agreement. Thank you very much for your amazing collaboration."

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So, these particular documentation that I'm sharing now is in the process of how we arrived to Elected and Appointed Minority Official Commission, which is going to be introduced in January, and I look forward to be approved into law and the start of the official curation, documentation and publishing of all existing information about Black and Brown Public Servants into a living document that's going to perpetuate the history of elected and appointed minority officials across the state of Rhode Island and I couldn't be any happier that a vision that I started 25, years ago, will now be an official Rhode Island legislative document, and an official documentation of the man and woman who have served at the state level, and municipal level and who knows, in the future the federal level. And as I told Representative Williams during our conversation, my goal, and vision is that our next generation will be able to search an locate information about our Black and Brown Public Servants just as easy as they can locate information about the privilege public servants, and will no confront the same experience Rep Willian and I confronted of not being able to obtain such information from the state library or any other entities.



# Black & Brown Leadership 2020-2040



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2020 BLACK & BROWN MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS



SUZANNA ALBA  
SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



AMA AMPONSAH  
PAWTUCKET CITY COUNCIL



TATIANA BAENA  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL



MELISSA DAROSA  
PAWTUCKET CITY COUNCIL



HUGO FIGUEROA  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL



CARLENE FONSECA  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL



ELIZABETH FUERTE  
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL



ANIECE GERMAINE  
CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL



VALERIE GONZALEZ  
WOONSOCKET CITY COUNCIL



STEPHEN LARBI  
PAWTUCKET SCHOOL BOARD



ANGELA MCCALLA  
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL



ROBERTO MORENO  
PAWTUCKET SCHOOL BOARD



JUAN CARLOS PAYERO  
PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE



MARIA RIVERA  
CENTRAL FALLS MAYOR



FRANKLIN SOLANO  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL



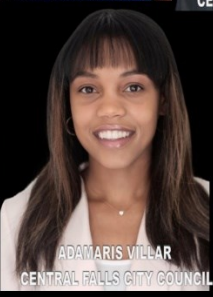
LAMINIS VARGAS  
CRANSTON CITY COUNCIL



JESSICA VEGA  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL



ELENA VASQUEZ  
PAWTUCKET CITY COUNCIL



ADAMARIS VILLAR  
CENTRAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL

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# Black & Brown Leadership 2020-2040



# Rhode Island Name Change Question

**Tomás Ávila**



it's  
**Rhode  
Island.**  
**Period.**

**YESON1RI.ORG**

Visit our website, at [YesOn1RI.org](http://YesOn1RI.org), for more information and to support the **Yes on 1** campaign.

Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)





Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)



Representative Anastasia P. Williams, a Providence Democrat Courtesy of Representative Anastasia P. Williams

Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)



Tomás Ávila, Latino [activist](#) and author of books on the rise of Latinos in Rhode Island politics Courtesy of Tomás Ávila

Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)



The Rev. Mahlon Van Horne, of Newport, who was the first Black person elected to the Rhode Island General Assembly. Courtesy of Keith Stokes

# The Boston Globe

## Rhode Island

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### ELECTIONS

## The future of RI politics? A more-diverse General Assembly

ELECTIONS

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'What we are witnessing is the mainstreaming of Black and brown communities across this country,' one activist says

By Edward Fitzpatrick Globe Staff, Updated October 30, 2020, 6:00 a.m.



PROVIDENCE — Tuesday's elections could produce the most diverse General Assembly in Rhode Island history.

When he began tracking the number of elected leaders of color in Rhode Island 25 years ago, Latino activist Tomás Ávila counted just one Latina state legislator and a dozen Black legislators, accounting for 9 percent of the General Assembly, which then had 150 seats.

On Tuesday, the number of legislators of color could jump from 15 to 20, which would represent 18 percent of a General Assembly that now has 113 seats.

Ávila said that would give Black and Latino lawmakers more political power than they've ever had in Rhode Island.



Collection of photographs of elected leaders and candidates of color in Rhode Island COURTESY OF TOMÁS ÁVILA

# TRAILBLAZERS:

an exhibit celebrating

FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS  
IN STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

honoring  
PHILIP ADDISON  
MARIA LOPES  
MAHLON VAN HORNE  
CHARLES WALTON  
BALBINA YOUNG

opening reception  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH  
PROVIDENCE CITY HALL  
3RD FLOOR  
11:00 A.M.

hosted by   
THE PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL

with MAYOR JORGE O. ELORZA PROVIDENCE CITY ARCHIVES RAY RICKMAN  
SENATOR HAROLD METTS REPRESENTATIVE RAY HULL

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**Reverend Mahlon Van Horne**



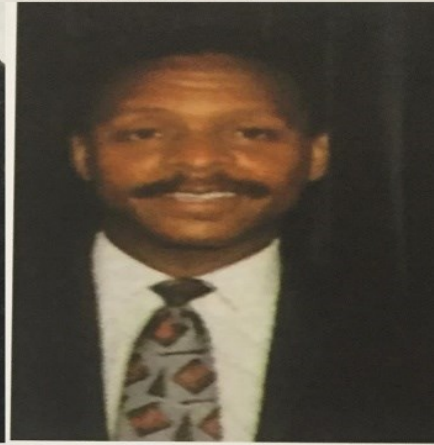
**Councilman Philip Addison Jr.**



**Councilwoman Balbina Young**



**Representative Maria Lopes** Mayo



**Senator Charles D. Walton**

## **Reverend Mahlon Van Horne**

Biography courtesy of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame

The career of Reverend Mahlon Van Horne (1840-1910) ranged from minister of the gospel to minister of diplomacy, though at heart, he was always a teacher.

Van Horne was born in Princeton, New Jersey and graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He taught school at Huntington, Long Island and Charleston, South Carolina, where he was principal of the Zion School.

In 1869, he arrived at the Union Congregational Church in Newport and became the congregation's first permanent pastor in three years. He served the congregation for the next twenty-eight years.

In 1873, Van Horne became the first person of color to sit on the Newport School Committee, a post he held for nearly 20 years. He was also Rhode Island's first black member of the General Assembly, elected in May 1885, and served three terms. During that time, Van Horne joined a statewide effort to integrate all of Rhode Island's public schools.

He brought awareness of the new civic role of blacks under the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U. S. Constitution with a letter writing campaign to the Newport and Providence newspapers. He also took part in the Colored Union Labor League-a group that helped freed slaves gain employment skills.

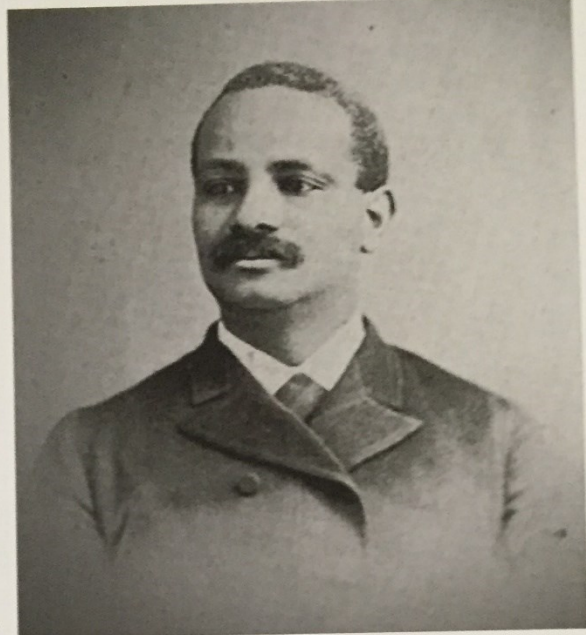
In the state legislature, Van Horne frequently reminded legislators that black men had defended American liberties from the time of the American Revolution to the recent sacrifices in the Civil War.

In December 1896, President William McKinley recognized Van Horne's public service by appointing him as U. s. Consul to the island of St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. Van Horne later became a missionary in Antigua and died in the West Indies in 1910.

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**Biography courtesy of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame**



## **Councilman Philip Addison Jr.**

Courtesy of the Providence City Archives and The Boston Globe

Born in Providence in 1916, Philip Addison Jr. grew up on Wheaton Street in the East Side of Providence and dedicated his career to serving the Providence community.

In the 1900s, Addison served as deputy director of the Neighborhood Youth Corps- an urban antipoverty program-and was also a boxing coach, trainer and counselor to young people who dropped out of school.

In 1969, Addison was elected as the first African American to sit on the Providence City Council. He represented the Mount Hope neighborhood, and became the council's democratic majority leader. In 1981, Mayor Vincent Buddy Cianci appointed him as the city's recreation director.

John Murphy, a councilman representing the 1st ward from 1967 to 1975, described Addison as a soft-spoken man regarded for bridging racial and ethnic divides. "It was a very unsettling time, and Phil was a voice of reason," Murphy said. " He was a perfect gentleman and a great civic leader," said Lawrence Flynn, chairman of the city's Board of Canvassers, who served with Addison on the council.

Addison was also a high-ranking member of the Society of Freemasons, and served as director of the Black Heritage Society and the Mount Hope Neighborhood Association. He also served as a board member of Home Loan and Investment Bank and was an adviser on minority-community relations to Miriam Hospital.

Addison passed away in 2006 at Roger Williams Hospital.

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**Courtesy of the Providence City Archives and The Boston Globe**

## **Senator Charles D. Walton**

Born in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1948, Charles D. Walton grew up in Washington D.C. Walton served in the U.S. Army R.O.T.C. program in 1969 and later graduated from Shaw University and the University of Massachusetts, where he earned a Ph.D. in Education in 1974. Walton moved to Rhode Island in the mid-1970s for a position at Roger Williams University, but soon found himself entering a career in public service.

Subject to gerrymandering with the redistricting of senate districts, Walton, along with members of the Urban League and the NAACP, challenged the Rhode Island State Senate and eventually prevailed in federal court. As a result of the court case, new Senate district lines were drawn. In 1983, Charles D. Walton became Rhode Island's first African-American state senator and first President Pro-Tempore of the Rhode Island Senate. He also served on the Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Special Legislation.

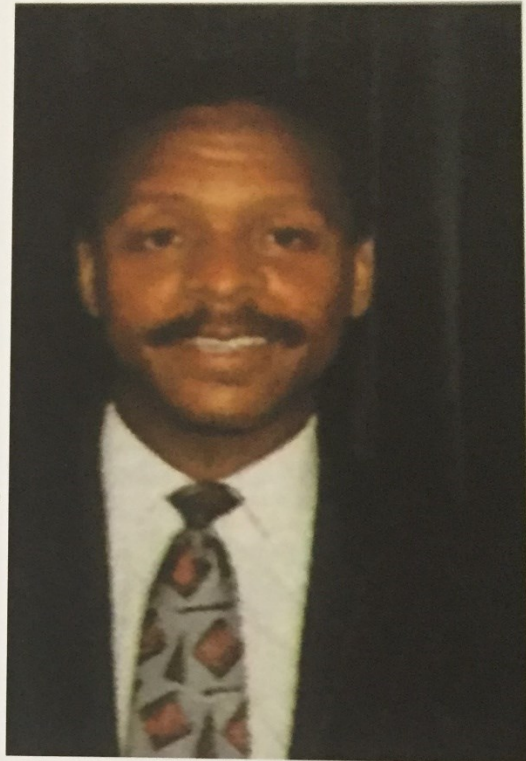
In 2000, Walton again faced redistricting challenges. This time the new proposed district would cut South Providence in half, depriving Walton of a large portion of his African-American voter base. After a long political battle, the district lines remained unchanged and Walton lost his seat during the 2002 Democratic primary.

Walton has served on numerous boards and committees since he began his political career in 1983, including the RI Adult Education Commission, the RI Black Heritage Society, the Trans-Africa lobby organization, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People; the Washington Park Citizens Association, the National Organization for Women, and the RI Public Transit Authority. He helped to establish the Providence campus of the Community

College of Rhode Island and became a director, the Director for Special Programs, for the Community College of Rhode Island after leaving the senate.

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## **Representative Maria Lopes**

(Courtesy of A Community Apart: A history of Public Housing in Providence, by Paul R. Campbell)

A Cape Verdean and wife of a Providence Firefighter, Maria Lopes began her career in social activism as a volunteer for the Tenant Affairs Board (TAB) and quickly worked her way up the ranks, becoming vice chair and eventually president of the organization.

Years later, she became the first African American woman elected to the Rhode Island State Legislature. Lopes lived in the Valley View housing project in the Wanskuck section of Providence. After Mayor Joseph A. Doorley and members of the Providence City Council began negotiating agreements to develop Valley View into luxury apartments, Lopes turned to social activism.

On May 29, 1973, Lopes organized more than 400 residents and supporters and stormed the city council chambers during a council session at Providence City Hall. Working with a civil rights lawyer by the name of Walter Stone, Lopes took legal action against Mayor Doorley and his political allies in the council.

After subsequent protests, Doorley and his council allies tried to sell the Valley View apartment complex to developers by hiding their intentions from the public and media. Informed of their plans, Lopes and her allies successfully convinced the Rhode Island Supreme Court to issue an injunction (a restraining order) on the sale just hours before the signing of the agreement. Walter Stone presented the injunction to the mayor and the city council.

Lopes' victory also allowed Doorley to finally be unseated from his mayoral seat during the 1974 election. The Valley View housing development was safe, for the time being. After conflict with Mayor Vincent Cianci, Lopes, the mayor, and a developer were able to come to an agreement in September 1983. Twenty-five percent of Valley Views' apartments would remain section 8 housing units and the current residents would have preference for the new subsidized units. 32 out of the 144 units would be developed into Luxury apartments.

After her time with TAB, Lopes became a career politician and continued her advocacy for affordable housing for low income residents, minorities, and senior citizens. Now a resident of East Providence, Lopes ran for a seat in the Rhode Island House of Representatives representing the 83rd district as a Democrat. Elected in 1989, she was the first African-American woman elected to the Rhode Island State Legislature and served over a little more than a decade, ending her career in 2001.



**Representative Maria Lopes** Mayor Doorley and his political allies in the council.

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## **Councilwoman Balbina Young**

Balbina Young was born in Providence and raised in the Fox Point and Smith Hill neighborhoods. In 1988, Young was elected to Providence City Council to represent the eleventh ward. Her district included parts of the Downtown, West End, Upper South Providence, and Elmwood neighborhoods. Young served on the council for 22 years, and became the first African-American and the first woman to serve as President Pro-Tempore. In 2002, Young also served a 90-day term as Council President when John Lombardi took over the interim role of Mayor of Providence.

Young worked to establish the Providence External Review Authority (PERA), a civilian oversight committee that reviews allegations of police misconduct. She was also involved with First Source Providence and worked to rename local parks after important community figures. One of Young's top accomplishments was her involvement with the Prairie Avenue Revitalization Initiative (PAR) which created both jobs and housing, and reduced foreclosure rates in her ward.

During an interview in 2009, Young discussed the importance of improving race relations in Providence: "I often hear Providence described as a minority-majority city, which in and of itself is a contradiction. Race and gender are still major issues that need to be discussed in the open if we are going to have real change.

In addition to her roles in city government, Young also served as director of residential services for the John Hope Settlement House- a group home and community service center for vulnerable children and their families - for 18 years.

In July, 2015, Young returned to public service as an administrator and liaison to the Providence city clerk's office

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Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)



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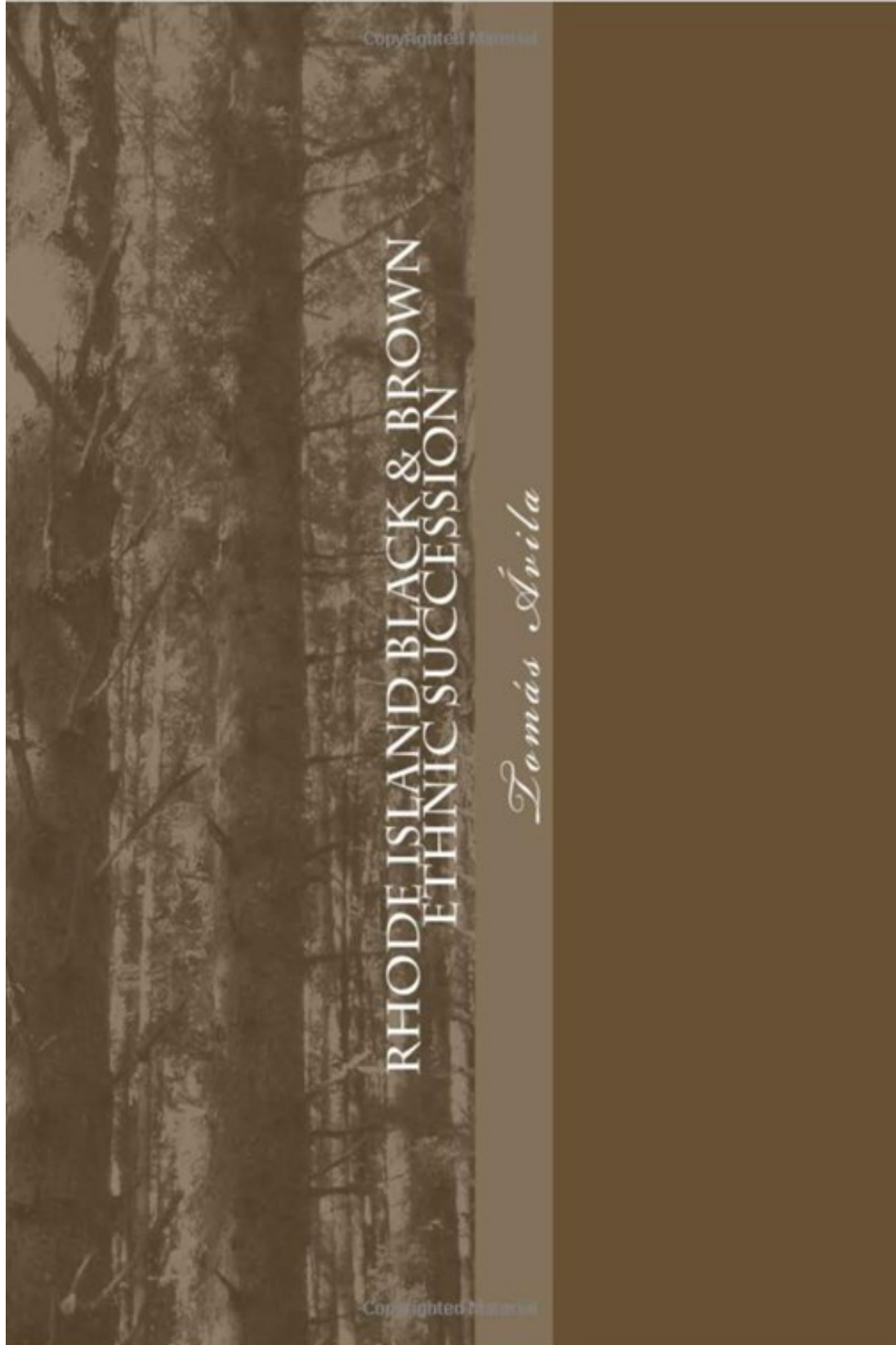
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## About Tomás Alberto Ávila



Tomás Ávila is a bilingual/bicultural, professional and community servant, with extensive experience in economic development, capacity building and Civic Engagement. He possesses strong organizational development, strategic planning/implementation, and demonstrated commitment to successful community building.

He spent over 40 years in the corporate, private, nonprofit and government sectors; most recently as Commissioner and Chairman of the City of Providence Board of Canvassers, appointed by Mayor Angel Taveras, becoming the first Latino Chairman in the city's 378 years history.

He was appointed to the City Government Equity Task Force by Mayor David N. Cicilline charged to review the City's affirmative action policy, minority contracting procedures, equal opportunity compliance, and other related issues, playing a significant role in the research, analysis and restructuring of the City's First Source Ordinance.

As a political activist, strategist, and consultant, he's been recognized as a political power broker and key player in the empowerment of the Latino/Hispanic community and involved in the election of many elected officials throughout Rhode Island and Northeast United States.

He is a founding member and past President of the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee (RILPAC), a nonpartisan organization that works "to influence the political process in the state of Rhode Island," to improve the quality of life in the Latino and urban communities. Cofounder of the New York Latina PAC, Delaware Latino PAC, New York Garifuna PAC. A founding member of the Rhode Island Redistricting Coalition (2000-2004), responsible for developing clear, legally defensible standards that were written into the enabling legislation and developed a highly public process for the 2002 redistricting of the Rhode Island political districts.

Ávila was appointed by Secretary of State Edward Inman to serve in the Commission to Study Rhode Island Election Procedures, that successfully prepared the state of Rhode Island for the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, and most recently appointed by the Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives Gordon Fox to serve in the Commission to study Rhode Island Election Process (2013).

He served the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs as Policy Analyst with the responsibilities of identifying and tracking of legislative issues that impact the Latino community and was appointed by Mayor David Cicilline to the Mayor's City Government Equity Task Force charged to review the City's affirmative action policy, minority contracting procedures, equal opportunity compliance, and other related issues. He also served as executive director of Progreso Latino, in Central Falls, Deputy Director and Policy Analyst at the Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy (CHisPA), President of the Rhode Island Political Action Committee (RILPAC).



## Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)

He is the founder and president of the Milenio Latino Institute, a tax-exempt, non-profit, non-partisan public policy analysis organization chartered in 2008 with the purpose to: conduct basic research aimed at improving the level of political and economic participation in Latino and other underrepresented communities.

Ávila is the editor of three books documenting the rise of Latino political power in Rhode Island; *A Decade of Latino Political Empowerment* (2006), *Mayor Angel Taveras, An Administration of Political Will* (2011), and *Rhode Island Black & Brown Ethnic Succession: 1984 – 1994*, 2012

Proactive in bringing business development services to the growing Latino community in the region; Avila assisted in meeting training and participation goals for entrepreneurs and existing businesses; managed and facilitated the Primer Paso FastTrac feasibility planning program, that provided assistance the skills necessary to successfully establish a business; and has been vital in the growth of Latino-owned business across Rhode Island. For his guidance and knowledge, he was awarded the 2007 State Star Award by the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) annually awarded to outstanding SBDC employees who are exemplary performers, make significant contributions to their state or region and show a strong commitment to small business.

He is a graduate of Leadership Rhode Island Upsilon class of 2000, AFL-CIO Leadership for a Future Class of 2000, the Pew Foundation Providence Civic Entrepreneurship Initiative class of 1998, the RISBDC Entrepreneurship Training Program (ETP) class of 1997. He's been involved with many community organizations, such as Quisqueya in Action, NCCJ, Common Cause Rhode Island, Adopt A Doctor, the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee, the Democracy Compact, the Southside/Broad Street, North End Housing Development Corporation, Board, Providence Civic Entrepreneur Initiative, CHisPA, Progreso Latino, to name a few.

During the 2020 John H. Chafee Lifetime Service Award presented to Ávila, by the United Way of Rhode Island, according to Mr. Zechariah Chaffee, a role that certainly would have appealed to his late father, US senator John H. Chafee, his many years, engaged in hands-on action in the election victories of Latino political candidates. and Ávila's understanding that "the path to power goes through the ballot box to ensure that the path is open to his people," and in recognition of his commitment to free and fair elections, former Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, appointed him a commissioner on and chairman of the Providence Board of canvassers, the first Latino to lead the board in the city's 378-year history. Tomas is a force for good in our state."

He pitched in the wellbeing of Latinos, as executive director of Progreso Latino, the largest and oldest Latino human services state nonprofit responsible for managing and implementing policies and programs that lead to the success of the agency's diverse clientele and stakeholders located in Central Falls, deputy director and Policy Analyst at the Center for Hispanic policy and advocacy (CHisPA), responsible of identifying and tracking legislative issues that impact the Latino and minority communities. in Providence, Policy Analyst at the Governor's Advisory Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and cofounder and president of the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee (RILPAC), among many other positions.

## Rhode Island Minority Elected, Officials (RIMEO)

Ávila played a key role in the 2002 redistricting as a member of both the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee, the Common Cause board, host of the founding meeting of the Fair Redistricting, responsible of developing clear, legally defensible standards those were written into the enabling legislation, developed a highly public process for 2002 redistricting, and successfully advocated to keep Providence districts entirely within the city to avoid diluting minority districts, and the Latino Voting Right Project, that promoted the participation of the Latino community in the 2002 redistricting process critical to determining the nature of Latino political representation at the Congressional, state and local levels of government for the next decade.

Ávila has been the recipient of multiple awards for his volunteer services such as: Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy (CHisPA) Outstanding Leadership (2002), Quisqueya In Action Outstanding Latino Professional (2003), Delaware PAC, Leadership Award (2003), Imagen Hispana Magazine Influential Hispanic of New England (2004), John Hope Settlement House Outstanding Community Leader (2004), ASBDC State Star Award (2007), Cesar Chavez Exceptional Leadership Award (2011), Quetzal Award (2013), NAACP Thurgood Marshall diversity empowerment Award (2014), HUDO Excellence in Civic Engagement Award (2015), RILPBN Exceptional Leadership in growth and development of Future Leaders (2015), Mujeres Emprendedoras Leadership Award (2015), Dominican Independence and Heritage Award (2016), RIPLA Outstanding Community Involvement Award (2016), Honduras General Consulate in New York, Outstanding Community Leadership Award (2016), Telemundo Providence Héroe de La Humanidad Award (2016), The Rhode Island Professional Latino Association (RIPLA) spotlight, (2020), Grand Marshal, The Dominican Festival and Parade of Rhode Island, in recognition of his dedication as a community servant, his commitment to economic development on all levels and helping to empower the :Latino community(2017), United Way of Rhode Island, John H. Chafee Lifetime Service Award (2020).

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