

vote Nirva LaFortune

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Primary election: *Wednesday, July 12*
General election: *Wednesday, August 16*

May 2017

Dear Neighbor,

My name is Nirva LaFortune. I'm a Democrat running for Providence City Council in Ward 3 because I've lived the challenges our city faces, and we need to come together to address them. We deserve honest, accountable government.

I followed my parents from Haiti to Rhode Island when I was three. We came here fleeing the Jean-Claude Duvalier "Baby Doc" regime, which spread oppression and corruption. My mother received her immigration papers first, leaving my father and me behind -- a separation many immigrant families know.

I grew up in Providence. We started out renting one room in a boarding house. I remember waking up early so my father could catch a van that took workers to a Providence factory. We did not have a car, but we walked to Knight Memorial Library to borrow books so my dad and I could work on our English. I remember watching him study for his GED, so he could get a job at the airport. My father always had 2 or 3 jobs. Eventually both of my parents became certified nursing assistants and saved enough to buy a home in Washington Park, where they still live today. My parents taught me resilience and the value of education.



I will always:

- ✓ **Advocate for strong public schools**
- ✓ **Support a woman's right to choose**
- ✓ **Stand up for immigrants**
- ✓ **Support sensible gun control**
- ✓ **Fight for the rights of people of all colors, faiths and sexual orientations**
- ✓ **Support open, honest government**

I know the challenges immigrant families face. I remember the fear of being undocumented and being separated from my family. As the oldest of five, I helped advocate for my siblings and helped translate. Neighbors told us to go back to our country and threw rocks at our house. My father would tell me: You stand up for yourself. I don't care how scared you are, you stand up. You have every right to be here.

My education outside of our home began in Head Start. I attended St. Mary's School and then Pleasant View Elementary. After school I would go to my uncle Saul's tailor shop. He'd teach me how to sew, and I

would run the cash register. The theater program at Nathanael Greene Middle School gave me confidence. At Mount Pleasant High School my teachers and track and field coach played an invaluable role in my development. I found as many enrichment programs as I could and brought the papers home for my parents to sign. I played sports, volunteered at a soup kitchen, and worked in the kitchen at RI Hospital, saving the money for college. I found mentors, and they helped me see my potential.

ElectNirva.com

Nirva LaFortune for Providence City Council 67 Duncan Ave, Providence, R.I. 02906 401-680-0252

Paid for by Friends of Nirva LaFortune, Joanna Brown, Treasurer

Every year my parents returned to Haiti to help, and they organized volunteers from churches in the U.S. and Haiti to join them. When I was 15, I took my first trip to Haiti. The volunteers were from different backgrounds, but they all came together to support the village of Chantal. That trip shaped how I began to think about community.

I earned a B.A. in communications from Temple University while I worked full time, juggling jobs at a hotel and in higher education. After I graduated I stayed in Philadelphia and began a career supporting students who dream, like I did, of a college degree. I finally became a U.S. citizen.

I returned to Providence after my grandmother, Delamise LaFortune, died at 99. In Haiti, she raised her children alone after the death of my grandfather, who was a farmer. She never learned to read, but she worked hard and was a talented seamstress. Every time I saw her she would recite a verse about honoring your elders. At her funeral, moved by her legacy of strength, I decided it was time to come home.

I moved to Mount Hope with my children, Messiah, now at Classical, and Nyree-Simone, who attends the Hope Academy at Meeting Street School. I work at Brown University supporting students from historically underrepresented groups and those with financial need. I run marathons, and my kids take lessons at the RI Philharmonic Music School. We have a plot in the Mount Hope Community Garden.

I am committed to working for public education. I know how important it is for our voices to be heard, and I have been active in the Nathan Bishop and Martin Luther King PTOs. The current and previous school superintendents know me because I show up and I speak up. I served on the High School Design Team for the Providence Public Schools, and I serve on a committee advising the RI Department of Education on implementing the ESSA, the federal law that governs our nation's public school system.

I work to build bridges. I serve on an East Side YMCA advisory committee and have encouraged more access and more collaboration with the Vincent Brown rec center. I co-chair the East Side Community Alliance youth and education committee, which is bringing people from east side neighborhoods together. My family has Shabbat dinner, Kwanzaa celebrations, and Ecuadorian meals with neighbors, and we invite them to our home for squash soup on Haitian Independence Day. We need more opportunities to listen, talk and share.

This a scary time in our country. We need strong, independent leadership at every level. I've never run for office before, but I am rolling up my sleeves and listening to the questions, concerns and good ideas of Ward 3. I know that we cannot move forward unless we trust our elected officials and believe that they represent our interests. Providence is filled with talented people who love their city. I want to bring people together across economic, racial and gender divides and put us to work on solutions.

Like many people who grow up with less, I know that what exists today is not good enough. I will fight for great public schools for every child. I will fight to make our city welcoming for immigrants and safe for everyone. And I will fight for honest, accountable and transparent city government. Our world is facing new challenges, and I am excited to participate in new ways to make it better.

I respectfully ask for your support as Ward 3's next City Council representative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nirva LaFortune". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Nirva LaFortune