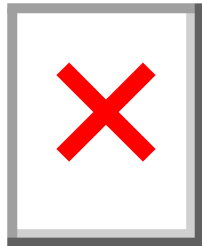


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Sent: Feb 14, 2025 12:29:01.000000000 UTC
Subject: Spilka rallies the resistance
To: lgrymek@cityofmelrose.org <lgrymek@cityofmelrose.org>

Feb 14, 2025

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BY KELLY GARRITY

Programming note: *We'll be off Monday for Presidents Day but back in your inbox on Tuesday.*

WE WILL 'ALWAYS' RESIST — Senate President Karen Spilka wasn't going to let President Donald Trump's return to the White House rain on her Galentine's Day soirée.

So, to kick off the event last night, "Senate President Karen Spilka" (played by drag queen TaDonna) opened with a "Drag Queen Story Hour," reminding the sea of red-and-pink-clad women leaders from politics, business and philanthropy, that Massachusetts, "the birthplace of equal marriage and

anti-discrimination legislation,” would “not change who we are,” as Gov. Maura Healey recently pledged.

The annual reception was back for Round Three last night — though this time under changed circumstances, with Trump’s victory over Kamala Harris, the first female vice president, last fall. But Spilka was ready to rally the resistance.

“I know I feel — and I know all of you feel — you can’t executive order human beings out of existence,” Spilka (the real one, not the drag version) told the packed room at Boston’s City Winery. “[You] can’t executive order Massachusetts to comply with bigotry and hate.”

“We will always — and I underline, all caps, always — resist,” she added.

The food-themed evening featured a panel of restaurant industry leaders, including Flour founder Joanne Chang and restaurateur and community leader Nia Grace. And Gov. Maura Healey and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll later walked out clad in full DunQueen attire for a cupcake and charcuterie design contest alongside Spilka and Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan.

Women still hold much of the power in Massachusetts, and the night was a celebration of their accomplishments (not so much their cupcake-decorating skills). But the event was still peppered with allusions to new leadership in D.C. — whether it was one panelist noting that their restaurants would shut down if immigrants could no longer work in them, or Spilka jokingly encouraging the crowd to cozy up to one attendee, Bernadette Jordan, the consul general of Canada in Boston, in case they might need a visa at some point in the next four years.

Still, expect Massachusetts to be the “beacon and backstop,” Driscoll said from the stage post-cupcake-charcuterie-off.

GOOD FRIDAY MORNING, MASSACHUSETTS. TGIF!

TODAY — Gov. **Maura Healey** has no public events. Boston Mayor **Michelle Wu** speaks at DeeDee’s Cry’s Mental Health While Black Summit at 12:15 p.m. in Everett.

THIS WEEKEND — Greg Maynard, director of the Boston Policy Institute, is on WBZ’s “Keller @ Large” at 8:30 a.m. Sunday. Boston Police Commissioner **Michael Cox** is on WCVB’s “On the Record” at 11 a.m. Sunday.

Have a tip, story, suggestion, birthday, anniversary, new job, or any other nugget for the Playbook? Drop me a line: kgarrity@politico.com.

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■ DATELINE BEACON HILL

— [“Shannon O’Brien would ‘bully’ and ‘abuse her colleagues’ as top cannabis regulator, treasurer said in firing her,”](#) by **Matt Stout, The Boston Globe**: “State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg said she fired Shannon O’Brien as the state’s top cannabis regulator last year because of several instances in which she would ‘bully, humiliate, and abuse her colleagues,’ according to newly released documents. Goldberg detailed her reasons for terminating O’Brien in an 80-page report made public Thursday, offering, for the first time, a more comprehensive accounting of her decision, which has been subject to months of litigation and political intrigue. Goldberg, a third-term Democrat, pointed to examples of O’Brien making racially inappropriate comments to staff, some of which had not been publicly aired before.”

ROUND THREE — State Rep. **Rob Consalvo** will carry the latest iteration of Boston’s property shift bill that passed the City Council Wednesday. He filed the bill Thursday, he told Playbook, but it might take a bit before any debate gets going. The House still has to pass a rules package for the session.

— [“Local leaders praise gov’s sweeping muni bill as way to reduce fiscal pressures; uphill battle in Legislature looms,”](#) by **Alexa Lewis, Daily Hampshire Gazette**.

2026 WATCH — One of the toughest questions Republicans hoping to win a statewide race in Massachusetts face: whether or not they support Trump.

It's one that a potential Republican challenger to Healey ran up against recently. Former Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy drew groans when he told a room of potential supporters he didn't cast a ballot for Trump in last year's election, per a video posted on [Facebook](#).

"I will work with Donald Trump if I'm governor to advance our interests here in Massachusetts," Kennealy said, when one person asked him if he supported the president.

"His approach is different than mine, his style is different than mine," he later added, and if elected governor he said his style would also be different than Healey's.

FROM THE HUB

— **["Days after Josh Kraft floats a version of 'rent control,' the Boston City Council just advanced something very similar,"](#)** by **Niki Griswold, The Boston Globe:** "The Boston City Council gave initial approval Wednesday to a proposal to offer property tax breaks to landlords who choose to keep their rents affordable — a policy that also happens to be the centerpiece of Josh Kraft's housing platform as he seeks to unseat Mayor Michelle Wu. Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata, who sponsored the legislation, brought it up for a vote at the end of the council's regular Wednesday meeting. The council voted 10-0 to approve the measure, with two councilors absent."

DRINK UP — After getting 225 new liquor licenses approved last year, Boston is letting the liquor flow. Boston's Licensing Board approved 37 new liquor licenses this week for businesses in neighborhoods across the city including Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Oak Square, Roslindale and Roxbury. The latest batch, according to the city, is "the single largest addition to Boston's liquor license quota since the end of Prohibition."

WHAT'S ON CAMPBELL'S DOCKET

DEI DO'S AND DON'TS — Attorney General Andrea Campbell's office issued guidance for businesses Thursday alongside AGs from 15 other states in response to Trump's executive order targeting DEI programs. [Read the guidelines or dive deeper with the Boston Globe.](#)

■ THE RACE FOR CITY HALL

GETTING ORGANIZED — More than 150 people joined Boston mayoral hopeful Josh Kraft's first volunteer organizing meeting Wednesday night, according to his campaign, a group that represented each of the city's neighborhoods.

— ["World Cup negotiations spotlight conflicts of interest Josh Kraft could face if elected mayor of Boston,"](#) by Emma Platoff and Janelle Nanos, The Boston Globe.

■ MIGRANTS IN MASSACHUSETTS

— ["Man accused of sexually assaulting 11-year-old in state shelter leaves U.S. before facing arrest, devastating girl's mother,"](#) by Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, The Boston Globe:

"A man from Honduras accused of sexually assaulting an 11-year-old girl in a Peabody state shelter in early December, and who was subsequently relocated to another state shelter housing families with children, has left the country before police could arrest him. Police obtained an arrest warrant on Feb. 4 for Jose Santos Ortiz Carranza, 32, nearly two months after the girl told authorities he assaulted her at the hotel shelter. But Peabody Police Chief Thomas Griffin said his department learned Ortiz Carranza was no longer in a state shelter, and then were told by authorities at Logan Airport he had left the country."

— ["Lowell Public Schools defends its migrant students, families,"](#) by Melanie Gilbert, The Lowell Sun: "Effective April 7, Temporary Protected Status will end for almost half of the 600,000 Venezuelans legally living in the United States. By September, the other half may also lose their TPS protection. The impact of that ruling, as well as the potential of others like it on families and students in Lowell, was on the agenda of the School Committee at its Feb. 5 meeting."

— [“Azorean officials prepare for wave of U.S. deportees,”](#) by Kevin G. Andrade, The New Bedford Light.

■ PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

— [“Massport mulls \\$15 fee on roundtrip Uber or Lyft ride to and from Logan,”](#) by Dana Gerber, The Boston Globe: “It could soon cost more to ride Uber and Lyft to and from Logan International Airport as the Massachusetts Port Authority considers an increase to the airport fees it charges ride-hailing companies. Currently, Massport charges ride apps a \$3.25 fee for pickups or drop-offs at Logan, which the ride-hailing giants then pass onto customers’ fares. But the agency that oversees the airport is discussing hiking those fees to \$5.50 each way starting in July, and then raising them to \$7.50 each starting in July 2027, according to materials presented at a Massport board committee meeting on Wednesday and obtained by the Globe. The increases are designed to “influence behavior and generate revenues needed to support ground transportation investments,” the materials said.”

■ BALLOT BATTLES

— [“Coalition backing MCAS ballot question spent just over \\$8 per vote in 2024, report says,”](#) by Chris Van Buskirk, Boston Herald: “A coalition that successfully convinced voters to nix the MCAS graduation requirement for high school students spent just over \$8 per vote during last year’s state election, according to a report released Thursday by campaign finance regulators. The tens of millions dished out on the fight between a teacher’s union and business groups to remove the standardized test as the gateway to high school graduation made it the most expensive of the five ballot questions during the 2024 state election.”

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■ DATELINE D.C.

— [“RFK Jr.’s plans could make Musk’s look small,”](#) by Chelsea Cirruzzo, Daniel Payne and Adam Cancryn, POLITICO: “Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is now in charge of the nation’s health agencies. His plans to upend them could make Elon Musk’s budget-cutting spree look modest by comparison. Kennedy won Senate confirmation on Thursday even after vowing to take nutrition and health programs in a radical new direction, and despite his long history of criticizing the safety of scientifically proven vaccines.”

LOCAL REACTION — [“Bay State leaders appalled by RFK Jr.’s confirmation,”](#) by Christian M. Wade, The Eagle-Tribune.

■ TRUMPACHUSETTS

— [“Three federal grants targeting diesel fuel emissions are now unavailable to Massachusetts,”](#) by Bhaamati Borkhetaria, **CommonWealth Beacon**: “In the same week a federal judge reiterated his order that all federal funding be disbursed as appropriated by Congress, yet more grants – the latest targeting emissions from diesel engines – became unavailable to Massachusetts state agencies as part of the Trump administration’s funding freeze, according to state officials. Three grants that are administered through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection have been marked ‘suspended’ as of February 13 in the federal funding portal that states use to request allocated funds.”

— [“Boston University, MIT tighten budgets as they brace for federal funding cuts,”](#) by Kirk Carapezza, GBH News.

— [“Berkshire farmers face financial uncertainty, put projects on hold during federal funding freeze,”](#) by Maryjane Williams, The Berkshire Eagle.

■ FROM THE 413

— [“With Superintendent Joseph Curtis resigning, the Pittsfield School Committee faces a choice on when, and how, to find a successor,”](#) by Greg Sukiennik, The Berkshire Eagle: “The resignation of schools Superintendent Joseph Curtis leaves the Pittsfield School Committee — and the city — facing some important questions and one big decision. That decision is the most immediate concern: Should the

School Committee seek a successor to Curtis right away, or appoint an interim superintendent and make a hiring decision next year, in time for the 2026-27 school year?”

THE LOCAL ANGLE

— [“Brockton School Police lose enforcement powers for second year running,”](#) by Chris Helms, *The Brockton Enterprise*: “For the second year in a row, Brockton School Police lost their law enforcement powers. School Police had no legal police powers for about five days and had to come to work in plain clothes. By local law, special police officers must be reappointed every year. Otherwise, their powers expire on the fourth Monday of January. That deadline was Monday, Jan. 27.”

HEARD ‘ROUND THE BUBBLAH

HAPPY BIRTHDAY — to Rep. **Richard Neal**, Medford native **Mike Bloomberg**, **Dave Whiting**, Springfield City Councilor **Jose Delgado**, **Hayley Johnson** and **Diana Felber**.

HAPPY BIRTHWEEKEND — to Law 360’s **Chris Villani**, who celebrates Saturday; and to Sunday birthday-ers former Massachusetts first lady **Lauren Baker**, Tisch College Dean Emeritus **Alan Solomont**, a former ambassador and DNC finance chair; **Amanda Sabga** and **Matt Crescenzo**.

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