

## Greater Boston Interfaith Organization hosts event to hold election candidates accountable



HAJJAH KAMARA

**Local politicians joined more than 1,000 GBIO members Monday at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center.**

By [Aimee Ortiz](#) GLOBE STAFF **OCTOBER 23, 2018**

“Faith in action” — that’s how some members of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization described the group’s pre-election meeting held Monday evening in Roxbury.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jay Gonzalez, and Suffolk County District Attorney candidates Rachael Rollins and Michael Maloney addressed more than 1,000 members of the group, who made it clear the politicians would be held accountable for their campaign promises.

As different congregations streamed into the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, members were given an information sheet and “score card” featuring each of the candidates.

The meeting gave the candidates a chance to reaffirm promises they made to the group earlier in the election season. The forum focused on healthcare and homeownership, criminal justice reform, conditions at Jeep Jones Park, and protections for immigrant families.

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“My message tonight for everyone who is afraid, for everyone who is angry, is this: we are still here for you and we are not going anywhere,” said Healey, whom members praised for her work against President Trump’s immigration policies.

“In two weeks, I know you’re going to make your voices heard,” she said later. “I stand with you, Mass“I stand with you, Massachusetts stands with you, and together we will stand up to anyone who threatens or endangers our immigrant communities and new Americans — even if they call themselves the President of the United States.”

Maloney and Rollins, who are vying to become the next Suffolk County district attorney, sought to differentiate themselves from the other and pledged to support criminal justice reform measures.

Maloney, touting his years as a defense attorney, said he believes in second chances. If elected, Maloney said his office would not seek bail in cases where prosecutors would not seek a jail sentence, and that diversionary programs would expand to include people up to age 25.

“I’ve been a strong proponent of second chances in professional life, in my private life, and will continue to do so as your district attorney,” he said in closing remarks.

Rollins, the first black woman to secure the Democratic nomination for Suffolk District Attorney, wasted no time in pointing out where she disagrees with Maloney.

“Bail is after you already have a criminal record,” Rollins said. “What I want to do is solve mass incarceration, and prior to you being arraigned, stop time and make sure you are not branded with a criminal record.”

Rollins said people who commit crimes that are “overwhelmingly crimes of poverty, mental illness, and addiction” should not be incarcerated.

“We’re going to hold you accountable,” she said. “But we’re going to use different tools than jail.”

Stressing the “collateral consequences” of spending even one night in jail, Rollins said the county needs a district attorney who will “change the system.”

“We deserve it,” she said. “We deserve a face that looks like mine, a female face, a new lens, a face of people who are often incarcerated ... I will bring my hardest work to you every day.”

Rollins cited her own experience as a prosecutor, criminal defense attorney, and civil rights attorney.

Gonzalez faced questions on homeownership as well as healthcare. He vowed that single-payer healthcare will eventually come to Massachusetts and pledged to designate at least \$50 million to help low-income people buy homes.

Gonzalez said he would also call for a “homeownership summit” that would look at the wealth disparity between people of color and whites in the state.

“I’m running for governor to fight for all the same people you fight for everyday,” Gonzalez said.

Governor Charlie Baker did not attend the event.

Bob Craigie, of Belmont, said Baker’s absence gave him pause.

“When people show up to talk to you, not talk at you . . . when people get up in front of this many people in a house of worship and say, ‘This is what I believe,’ that’s real.” he said.

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