



Congressional Briefing Speaker Bio's

Congressman Dwight Evans D-PA-3rd District



Congressman Dwight Evans represents Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Northwest and West Philadelphia and parts of North, South and Center City Philadelphia. He was first elected in a special election in November 2016. Before that, he served as a state representative for 36 years, and earned a reputation as a pragmatic leader who knows how to put public policy above politics and make ideas matter. He made history in 1990 when he became the first African-American chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, a position he held for two decades.

Throughout his public service career, Congressman Evans has worked tirelessly to expand and broaden access to economic and educational opportunities for all Philadelphians. He currently serves on the influential Ways and Means Committee, which handles tax, trade, Social Security and Medicare legislation. In his first term, he had one of his bills passed and signed into law, a true accomplishment for a freshman in the minority party. That law is designed to reduce costs for small business owners who apply for a loan through the Small Business Administration. He also hosted a roundtable in Philadelphia on small business issues with Ranking Member of the Small Business Committee Nydia Velazquez.

In his first term, he also supported a criminal justice reform bill which became law, the First Step Act. His efforts have also included hosting a roundtable on the subject in Philadelphia with Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee Jerry Nadler. Congressman Evans is also a member of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and has co-led legislation such as the VICTIM Act that would provide \$1 billion in federal funding to solve more shooting cases and provide more help for victims.

Congressman Evans continues to work to advance priorities such as protecting health care and reducing health disparities, and advocate for gun reform, criminal justice reform and economic development, including supporting small businesses. He is proud of his votes for landmark new laws signed by President Biden, including the American Rescue Plan; the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act; the Inflation Reduction Act that has capped the cost of insulin for seniors on Medicare Part D and is making the nation's largest-ever investment in addressing climate change; and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the first major federal gun-safety law to pass in nearly 30 years.

A longtime resident of the West Oak Lane neighborhood, he is a graduate of Germantown High School, the Community College of Philadelphia and LaSalle University. Congressman Evans will keep working to rebuild Philadelphia, and America, block by block!



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Representative Gina H. Curry D-PA 164th District



State Representative Gina H. Curry was elected in a November 2021 special election to represent the 164th Legislative District in Delaware County. Representative Curry serves on several committees & Caucuses including but not limited to: Appropriations, [Children & Youth](#), [Education](#), [Transportation](#), [Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus](#), [Southeast Delegation](#), PA Women's Commission and, Co-Chair of the Women's Health Caucus.

Prior to being elected state representative, Gina worked as a Diversity Equity and Inclusion/Racial Equity consultant and trainer, as a small business owner of Coach Your Vision LLC, and diligently served in many community-based roles including serving as vice president of the Upper Darby School Board. She brings to Harrisburg a strong understanding of community needs, fairness and grassroots advocacy in education, women's health, and real estate/housing.

She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Criminal Justice with a concentration on Sociology from St. Joseph's University. She also has experience in the behavioral health field as a clinical supervisor, behavioral specialist, and therapeutic consultant to children and families.

Jenné Johns, MPH President- Once Upon A Premie, Inc.



Jenné Johns, MPH a Philadelphia native, health equity thought leader, author, speaker, and advocate for Black Birthing Women. While advocating for the needs of her own son born premature, Jenné wrote, *Once Upon a Premie*, the first of its kind children's book written for parents of premies while in the NICU. Currently, Jenné is President of Once Upon A Premie a non-profit organization on a mission to drive equitable health outcomes for one million Black Premie Families.

A graduate of the Disparities Leadership Program at Harvard University Medical School, Jenné has over a decade experience advocating for policy, and community changes to improve health equity and health outcomes for Black communities. She also led quality improvement and health equity transformation strategies with the nation's largest managed care and commercial health insurance companies. Jenné holds a Masters Degree in Public Health from Temple University and a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. It is Jenné's life mission to see a world free of bias toward black birthing women and NICU families, and this journey is just getting started!



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Jaye Wilson, LPN Founder- Melinated Moms



Jatesha "Jaye" Madden-Wilson is a Black Woman, Mom, Social Entrepreneur, Social Impact Speaker, Maternal Health Advocate, Published Author and Self-sufficiency Coach. Jaye has created big strides in advocacy for women of color most notably with the First Lady and Governor of New Jersey as a public speaker and maternal health advocate for Nurture NJ with the Black Maternal Health crisis. In her professional career as a Community Health Nurse, she provided clinical care and moved into clinical operations as the Nursing Operational Manager for Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, a Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that specializes in providing care for the LGBTQ+ community. Jaye received her first opportunity in advocacy while at Callen Lorde and began lobbying in Washington DC, Albany NY and Trenton, NJ as a community advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. While in these positions, she saw the importance of how

community advocacy and engagement created better physical, emotional and mental health outcomes for its people. After 10+ years at Callen-Lorde, Jaye went through several transitions, both personally and professionally, which sparked the idea of creating a community of support that changed the narrative of motherhood, sisterhood and womanhood. Starting as a small mommy meetup group, Melinated Moms quickly grew into a health equity-focused women empowerment organization that changed the way community engagement related to maternal health. As her organization has grown, she has incorporated the additional titles of published author, and she was recently appointed by the Governor of New Jersey as a Special State Officer for the New Jersey Maternal Health Quality Collaborative.

Melinated Moms is a MOM Profit™ – a community-centered women empowerment social enterprise supporting moms and women to become better versions of themselves through advocacy, education, awareness and entrepreneurship. We provide support for our community by creating opportunities for moms and women across the Melinated Spectrum to connect, engage and empower each other with the right support behind them. We primarily work with nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to curate community engagement opportunities that learn from the communities that we support; creating trust and real-time change with the community members as the primary stakeholders and changemakers.

In the last 5+ years, our reach has grown from local to international in less than one year. Through that exponential growth, Jaye has learned the value of Key Community Partnerships to build the capacity of what Melinated Moms can do and how we can change the narrative of health equity across all phases of conception. Melinated Moms has reached over 10,000 people worldwide through her virtual and in-person events and has created a reputation for her organization that is trusted for its authenticity and support. The biggest increase in engagement came during the COVID-19 pandemic when Jaye decided to pivot the business structure from in-person only to virtual, garnering a 200% increase in engagement. Melinated Moms continue to connect and



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empower moms, women and birthing people throughout the Melinated Spectrum to find their power and purpose in their lives.

Jaye is the proud mother of 2 young girls, Nadiyah and Ava, who continue to move and motivate her to create a space where women's rights are acknowledged and not silenced.

Johnathan Webb, CEO Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses



Jonathan Webb is the CEO for the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN). He has spent two decades in the public health and healthcare space spanning local, state and national levels promoting equity, improving community health outcomes, addressing the social determinants of health, and tackling a number of epidemics including maternal and infant mortality, childhood obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. His professional experience includes work for two local health departments; the Office of Epidemiology of the City of Chicago, and leading the Community Health Division of the City of Evanston. Additionally, as a nonprofit executive, Mr. Webb has led strategy building and execution efforts, built meaningful partnerships, has been a skilled fundraiser, a strong advocate and implemented programming for organizations such as the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), McGaw YMCA, Feed the Children, the American Diabetes Association and the American Osteopathic Association.

Jonathan also serves as a co-chair of the March of Dimes' National Advisory Council for the Mom Baby Action Network, a Board Member for the American Board of Pediatrics Foundation and a member of its Family Leadership Committee a Board member for Nurse Family Partnerships and Child First, a Steering Committee Member of the Pritzer Prenatal to Three Initiative and a member of the Academy Health Family Partnership Workgroup for the HRSA Coordinating Center for Children with Medical Complexity.

Mr. Webb is also a member of the inaugural cohort of the Obama Leaders USA program.

Jonathan is an Adjunct Instructor for the George Washington University's School of Medicine and Health Sciences in the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Virginia Union University, a Master of Public Health degree from George Washington University and a Masters of Business Administration degree from the University of Notre Dame.

His service has prioritized centering community voices and lived experiences while creating environments and systems that support equitable care and health outcomes for all. He is an



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advocate for women, children, pregnant and birthing people, and children and youth with special health care needs. Jonathan is a proud son, husband and father of two beautiful children.

Rev. Dr. Lorina Marshall-Blake, MGA, FAAN President, Independence Blue Cross Foundation Vice President of Community Affairs, Independence Blue Cross Foundation



Lorina Marshall-Blake is the president of the Independence Blue Cross Foundation (the Foundation), a charitable, private foundation founded in 2011, and also the vice president of community affairs at Independence Blue Cross (Independence).

In her role with the Foundation, she leads strategic, programmatic, and operational efforts to fulfill the Foundation's mission to lead sustainable solutions that improve the health and wellness of the community. Under her leadership, the Foundation has established itself as a collaborator, innovator, and thought leader in addressing emerging health needs in southeastern Pennsylvania.

As the vice president of community affairs, Marshall-Blake develops and manages relationships with community partners to advance Independence's social mission efforts.

Marshall-Blake is passionate about giving back to the community. She is involved with more than 30 professional and civic organizations, including the Anti-Defamation League and the United Negro College Fund, and is the former president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Omega Omega Chapter. She is also an associate minister at the Vine Memorial Baptist Church in Philadelphia.

Currently, she also serves on more than 25 non-profit boards and committees including the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association — Corporate Responsibility Committee, The Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia's Paradigm Award & Scholarship Committee, the Urban Affairs Coalition, and the Urban League of Philadelphia. Marshall-Blake also serves on Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions Executive Advisory Council and Rutgers School of Nursing — Camden Dean's Leadership Circle. She is also an Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and was appointed to the National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice.



Niesha D. Darden, Postpartum Doula Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



Niesha D. Darden is a multi-faceted individual, embodying a range of expertise in her various roles as a mother, clinical research coordinator, postpartum doula, maternal-child health research consultant, and perinatal health advocate. Her experiences as a mother have deepened her understanding and compassion in her professional roles, guiding her commitment to supporting families throughout their unique journeys.

Professionally, Niesha plays a pivotal role managing and contributing to grant funded research studies in the Intensive Care Nursery (ICN) at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. As a clinical research coordinator and professionally trained postpartum doula, she facilitates and manages research projects focused on advancing maternal health in neonatal spaces and improving outcomes for premature infants and their families. Her compassionate and knowledgeable approach offers much-needed comfort and guidance to families navigating the complexities of premature birth and postpartum health.

Beyond her work in the NICU, Niesha is recognized for her expertise as a maternal-child health research consultant and perinatal health advocate. Through her consultation services, she provides invaluable insights and evidence-based solutions to various projects and initiatives, with a focus to improve maternal and child health outcomes. Her research and advocacy work involves raising awareness about important issues and championing policies within healthcare systems that support the well-being of families in Philadelphia.

With her diverse skill set and unwavering dedication, Niesha exemplifies a passion for making a positive impact both in the world of clinical research and in her community. Her holistic approach to her roles reflects a deep commitment to creating an equitable, more supportive environment that extends far beyond the realms of her expertise, leaving a lasting and positive influence on the lives of many.