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Emerge Kentucky Alumnae Win Big in 2018 Election

Louisville, KY: Alumnae from Emerge Kentucky—a non-profit organization that has recruited and trained nearly 200 women to run for public office since 2010—had a total of 27 election night wins. Seven of those wins were for the Kentucky State House.

The seven State House wins include:

- Nima Kulkarni, an immigration lawyer, will be the first Indian-American to serve in the Kentucky General Assembly. She won with 74% of the vote in her first run for public office.
- Tina Bojanowski, a public school teacher and first-time candidate, defeated a two-term Republican male incumbent in Louisville/Jefferson County's House District 32, flipping the seat from red to blue.
- Josie Raymond won her election for House District 31 in Louisville/Jefferson County with 60% of the vote.
- Maria Sorolis won her election for House District 48 in Louisville/Jefferson County, defeating a Republican male incumbent.
- Patti Minter, a professor at Western Kentucky University, picked up the District 20 house seat in Warren County after winning a five-way contested primary.
- Alumnae reelected to the Kentucky State House include Hon. Attica Scott and Hon. McKenzie Cantrell of Louisville/Jefferson County.

These seven women include four first-time candidates (Kulkarni, Bojanowski, Raymond, and Minter) and two women of color (Kulkarni and Scott). Two of the women defeated Republican male incumbents providing the Democrats with pick-ups in the state house.

Additional Wins include:

- Emerge alumna Beverly Chester-Burton made history by winning Mayor of Shively as the first African American elected to this position.
- Four judicial races were won, three in Jefferson County by Hon. Anne Delahanty, Tanisha Hickerson, and Hon. Jessica Moore, and one in Clark County by Cole Adams Maier.
- Dana Beasley-Brown, first-time candidate, won her election for City Commission of Bowling Green.
- Emerge alumnae also won five county-wide races in Grant, Hardin, Simpson, and Daviess counties: Tabatha Clemons (Grant County Clerk), Debbie Donnelly (Hardin County Clerk), Loretta Crady (Hardin Circuit Court Clerk), Beth Fiss (Simpson County Circuit Court Clerk), and Rachel Pence Foster (Daviess County PVA).
- In Louisville and Lexington, Emerge alumnae won seats on the city council including Angela Evans and Kathy Plomin in Lexington and Nicole George in Louisville.

Founder and Board Chair of Emerge Kentucky Jennifer A. Moore knows these wins are milestones for women across the Commonwealth. "With this election, Kentucky women made their voices heard. The number of Emerge alumnae serving in the state house increased from two to seven and women won races in all areas of the Commonwealth. No longer is Kentucky at the bottom of women serving in office," said Moore. "Emerge is making progress in Kentucky."

Executive Director Blair Haydon is proud of the collective effort of all the Emerge women on the ballot this year. “We couldn’t be more proud, regardless of election outcome, of how much time and effort went in to each of these races,” said Haydon. “We train women to run and run hard. The numbers reflect that, win or lose.”

With each election that comes to pass, the work of Emerge Kentucky adds diversity to local legislature and dismantles the so-called glass ceiling, known for barring minority participation in government. Seven of this year’s wins are women of color.

Applications for the Emerge KY Class of 2019 are now open, and close on November 13th, 2018. Information on Emerge’s six-month signature training program and how to apply can be found at: <https://ky.emergeamerica.org/training/>

Emerge Kentucky is the premier candidate training program for Democratic women. We inspire women to run and we hone their skills to win. Our goal is clear: to increase the number of Democratic women in public office.

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