



Life in Brief

Born: April 10, 1967

Hometown: Dorchester, MA

Current Residence: Dorchester, MA

Education:

- B.A., Boston College, 2009

Family:

- Girlfriend, Lorrie Higgins

Work History:

- Mayor of Boston, 2014-present
- President, Boston Building Trades, 2011-13
- State Representative from the 13th district, 1997-2014
- Union Official, LiUNA Local 223 Union, dates unknown
- Construction Worker, dates unknown

Professional Associations

- U.S. Conference of Mayors
- Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Electoral Overview

- Won 2017 general mayoral election with 65.4% of the vote. Won in 2013 with 51.5% of the vote
- Won 13th Suffolk primary with 32.8% of the vote in 1997. Won unopposed in general election with 98.8%. Won re-election eight times with an average of 97.7% of the vote, running unopposed in all but one general election

Quick Summary

Boston mayor and Democrat with union background who advocates for low-income communities and has become a leading voice on substance abuse. Frequently cites unconventional political profile as recovering alcoholic who earned his college degree as an adult

- Son of Irish immigrants who was born and raised in Dorchester and battled childhood cancer
- Union member for his entire adult life and received crucial support from labor groups during mayoral run. However, has embraced pro-business groups, including Boston Chamber of Commerce, on initiatives to grow economy
- Work with State Rep. James Brett served as primer to entering public office. Earned spot in Massachusetts State House without a college degree
- Advocates for low-income families through workforce development initiatives and affordable housing, including pushing for higher state-wide minimum wage and expanding public housing
- Struggled with alcoholism as a young adult and has made combatting substance abuse a priority as mayor and in his role at the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Approach and Motivations

Cultivates working class persona who advocates for underdogs

- Considers himself an underdog having faced host of health problems in his young life
- Strong background in labor union leadership; was arrested at rally for UPS workers when he first entered State House
- Believes union jobs are the foundation of a middle class. However, does not believe being pro-union and pro-business are mutually exclusive

Policy Positions and Areas of Focus

Concern for underserved communities drives policy priorities of economy, housing market, and substance abuse programming

Economic Development: *Bringing business to Boston and empowering workers*

- Negotiated incentive packages for companies relocating to Boston, including GE and Reebok
- Attracts trade and tourism, including through trade missions with China, Israel, and Ireland
- Instituted policies to protect low-wage workers while boosting consumer spending to grow economy, including salary negotiation training and \$15/hour Minimum Wage Task Force

Housing Insecurity: *Expands housing options for city's low-income and homeless populations*

- Upgraded Inclusionary Development Policy requiring developers to build and fund more homes for low-income families
- Secured federal funding and dedicated proceeds from city-owned parking garage to rebuild and add public housing in Roxbury, East Boston, and South Boston
- Expanded housing options for Boston's homeless population, including through additional shelters and the Landlord Guarantee Fund pilot, which supports landlords who rent to chronically homeless individuals

Fighting Addiction: *Resources for individuals struggling with substance abuse disorders*

- Created Office of Recovery Services and launched a 24-hour hotline
- Created Engagement Center for people who experience addiction to receive services
- As Chair of U.S. Conference of Mayors substance abuse task force, crafted toolkit for mayors to address substance abuse disorders, including overdose prevention training

Core Communities

Despite union background, also maintains network of pro-business advocates. Involved in larger community of U.S. mayors

Unions: *Strongly backed by unions and has partnered with them on employment initiatives*

- Before becoming Mayor, led Boston Metropolitan District Building Trades Council. While there, created partnership with organizations, including Boilermakers Northeastern and Springfield Electrical, to train women and minorities in construction trades
- Campaign support from unions including Service Employees International and Working America
- Collaborates with unions on workforce development, including matching previously incarcerated people with apprenticeships at unions such as Boston's Sprinkler Fitters

Business Community: *Involves business-minded individuals and groups on economic growth strategy and safety initiatives*

- Partners with Governor Charlie Baker on negotiating economic incentives to attract companies like GE to Massachusetts
- Regularly engages with Boston Chamber of Commerce, including aligning with them in 2024 Olympic bid. Supported by group for re-election
- Enlisted help of local business groups, including Massachusetts Business Roundtable, to form public-private partnership to end sex trafficking

Mayors: *Partners with mayors from across the country on policy areas of interest*

- Worked with friend and Framingham, MA mayor Yvonne Spicer on Student Opportunities Act
- Collaborates with fellow Co-Chair Mayor Steve Williams of Huntington, WV on U.S. Conference of Mayors substance abuse task force
- Organized report and conference on income inequality with NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio

Relevant Financial Information

During mayoral run, has attracted donations from working-class New Englanders and national labor unions

Biggest Individual Donors (2013-present)

- Ryan Denver, Owner of Select Demo (Kingston, NH), \$6,500
- Dana Barrett, Police Officer (Boston, MA), \$5,500
- Stephen Marcus, Venture Capitalist at Riot VC (Boston, MA), \$4,750
- Jacques Abatto, Retired (Boston, MA), \$3,000
- Dominic Abramo Jr., Carpenter (Melrose, MA), \$2,500

Labor Union Donors (2013-present)

- Has received \$500,000 in contributions from labor unions across the country, mostly headquartered in Massachusetts, Washington D.C., and the Midwest
- Boston Firefighters Union Local 718: \$15,000
- Illinois' Laborers' Legislative Committee: \$15,000
- Wisconsin Laborers' District Council Political Fund, \$150,000
- International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers, \$15,000
- New England Regional Council of Carpenters, \$15,000

Political Donations: *Walsh and his election committee have donated to Massachusetts politicians*

- Stephen Lynch for Congress, \$2,500, 2001, 2004
- John Kerry for President, \$1,000, 2004

Publications, Media, and Speaking

Primarily comments on Massachusetts economy in state and national newspapers, cable news, and economic forums. Also discusses social issues and personal background

Publications: *Has authored op-eds in national and city newspapers on Boston's economic progress and social policies, including sanctuary city status*

- Favorite Subjects: Immigration, gun control, legalization of marijuana, economic development
- Preferred Outlets: National news outlets including CNN, and Boston-based newspapers including the Boston Herald, Boston Magazine, and the Boston Globe
- Frequently co-authors with Governor Charlie Baker and Attorney General Maura Healey

Media: *Appears in national and local media to speak on personal background, city progress, and criticize the Trump Administration*

- Favorite Subjects: Substance abuse, cancer, the Massachusetts economy, President Trump
- Preferred Outlets: National cable news including MSNBC, and local outlets including WGBH, Boston Herald, and WCVB Channel 5 Boston
- Social Media Habits: Active on Twitter

Speaking: *Discusses personal experience overcoming health obstacles at medical foundations and engages with state business community on the economy*

- Favorite Subjects: Substance abuse, cancer, innovation in the economy, employment
- Preferred Audience: Health centers including Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Lowell House, and economic development groups including Boston Chamber of Commerce and Dorchester Board of Trade

Family and Personal Background

Grew up in working-class Irish family and still lives in hometown of Dorchester

Son of Irish immigrants who faced adversity as a child and young adult

- Son of working-class Irish immigrants and is fluent in Gaelic
- Leukemia survivor, diagnosed at age 7 and found cancer-free at age 11
- College drop-out, but returned to school as an adult to take night classes at Boston College
- Recovering alcoholic with more than twenty years of sobriety

COVID-19 Response

Walsh has urged Bostonians to follow social distancing guidelines, and has made efforts to limit public activity

Relevant Positions

- Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts

Actions: *Has implemented measures to limit public activity, and has enacted ways to ease the financial burden caused by the pandemic*

- Implemented a cloth mask advisory for anyone leaving their homes, and a citywide curfew between 9pm and 6am through at least May 4
- Closed all public facilities, including playgrounds and recreational sports areas
- Is providing face masks to city employees required to work outside their homes
- Has dedicated \$3 million in city funds to assist residents at risk of losing their rental housing
- Extended the due date for property tax bills from May 1 to June 1; has waived interest on late property and motor vehicle tax payments

Statements: *Strongly advocates adhering to social distancing guidelines and helping those in need when possible*

- Updates the public on a daily basis using social media, robocalls, and text alerts
- Posts safety information and uplifting messages to his constituents on his Twitter account
- Urges adhering to social distancing guidelines, sheltering in place, and washing one's hands frequently to combat the spread
- Warned of potential citations for anyone caught ignoring social distancing guidelines
- Encourages residents to donate to the Boston Resiliency Fund to support residents in need; also encourages donating unused PPE to health professionals
- Supports housing lenders' decision to offer deferred mortgage payments to those financially impacted by the pandemic
- Has announced the city's plan to create 1,000 beds at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center to prepare for a likely surge