

# John Barros joins cabinet; Mayor Marty Walsh defends record on hiring

Yawu Miller | 2/12/2014, 10:44 a.m.



Boston Mayor Marty Walsh today named John Barros, a former mayoral candidate as Chief of the Economic Development — including overseeing the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Barros was the first-ever youth elected to the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) Board of Directors. As a freshman at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Barros continued to speak up for the needs of young people in Roxbury and Dorchester PHOTO BY **TRAVIS WATSON**

Mayor Marty Walsh tapped former mayoral candidate John Barros to serve as Boston's first Chief of Economic Development, a cabinet-level position with supervision over the Boston Redevelopment Authority and six city departments.

Walsh made the announcement Monday at Future Chefs, a South End program that trains people for work in restaurants.

Standing in front of a group of trainees, Barros told reporters his views on economic development fit well with the mayor's vision of extending economic opportunity to all Bostonians.

"We have a mayor in this city who believes in the people behind me," he said. "He believes in their ability to succeed. He's going to move this city forward to make sure they have the opportunity to succeed."

Barros said that among his priorities will be streamlining the licensing process for small businesses, attracting more businesses to Boston and expanding the city's youth jobs program to make sure teens gain real work skills.

Walsh said he and Barros will work to ensure that women and people of color are included in the city's economic progress.

"Boston will be a place where everyone can climb the economic ladder to success," he said.

A former executive director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and co-founder of Cesaria Restaurant in Dorchester, Barros grew up in Roxbury's Dudley Street neighborhood and graduated from Dartmouth College.

The city departments Barros will supervise are Consumer Affairs and Licensing, Tourism, Small and Local Business Enterprise/Boston Residents Jobs Policy, Boston Employment Commission, Jobs and Community Service and Special Events.

## Walsh defends record on appointments

Barros' appointment brings the number of people of color in his cabinet to three, including Chief of Staff Daniel Arrigg Koh and Chief of Health and Human Services Felix G. Arroyo.

There are five whites appointed to positions in the cabinet and two whites in interim positions in the cabinet.

Responding to criticism that he's been slow to fulfill his campaign promise to build a leadership team reflective of the city's diversity, Walsh told the Banner his cabinet is far from complete.

"I have no problem being criticized," he said. "When your article came out, it was 30 days. I think people need to take a deep breath and let me roll out the team. Our cabinet is almost 50 percent full now. We still have a long way to go."

As of last week, 39 percent of the 60 appointments Walsh made in his cabinet, in City Hall departments and in the police department were people of color. Walsh has pledged to build an administration that is reflective of the diversity of the city — which is 53 percent people of color.

Monday Walsh said he is committed to fulfilling that pledge.

"There's a clear message from the mayor's office that we want to be a government that reflects the city of Boston," he said. "I've made that clear."

More than half of the people of color appointed to positions within the Walsh administration are officers in the police department. The Police Department now has the most diverse command staff in its history with 50 percent of those leadership positions held by people of color and women.