The people, the roles, the disclosures

John Williams v. BHPK | Suffolk Superior Court | Docket No. 2684CV02864 | Integrated update: October 30, 2026

Laurie Greenwood

John Williams's foster mother. March 18, 2011: letter seeking help for John Blouin; Governor Patrick appears on the copy list. [16,25] Cook held a role in his office at the time. [2,17]

Letter copy list [16]

Cook: BBA commission appointee + Finance Subcommittee, 2019 [30,31]

Deval Patrick

Governor of Massachusetts.
Pineault served as Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, 2007–2009 (published biography). [39,41]

Government legal roles [2,40]

Deputy Chief Legal Counsel 2007–2009 [39,41]

COOK / PINEAULT Shared Patrick legal-office service [39-41]

Kate R. Cook

Deputy Legal Counsel from Patrick's inauguration. [40]
2011–2013: Policy & Cabinet Affairs.
2013–2014: Chief Legal Counsel; candidate review under EO 500 §7.0. [2,28]
2022: First Assistant AG. [4]
2023: Healey Chief of Staff. [4,42]

Spouses [4]

Chief of Staff [4,42]

2010 [7]

Thomas R. Donohue

Cook's spouse; BHPK partner. [4]
BHPK says he had no role in Williams's DCF case. [6]

Partner [4]

BHPK

Williams's former law firm.
Former counsel: **Erica Brody, Leonard Kesten, Richard Brody, Samuel Perkins.** [6]
Current counsel: **Edward Cheng** and **Luke Colomey**, Sherin and Lodgen LLP. [38]

2019 SAAG roles [3]

Partner / former counsel [6,8]

Partner / former counsel [6,11]

Sheriff's Office

Barnstable County
Dec. 30, 2019: Brody named herself and Kesten as Special Assistant AGs in **Huling, Pina and Smith**; requested Williams's consent. [3]

Funding-review scope included Barnstable County [30,32]

Michael J. Pineault

Superior Court judge.
Healey nomination: Oct. 20, 2023. [39]
Council vote: Nov. 8, 2023, 6–1. [43]
Civil E roster effective Oct. 28, 2026. [44]
Allowed Williams's service motion Oct. 28, 2026. [46]

HEALEY / PINEAULT Nominated Oct. 20, 2023 [39]

Maura Healey

2022: Attorney General.
2023: Governor.
Government forms document Cook's screening / reassignment from BHPK matters, including the underlying case. [4]
Nominated Pineault Oct. 20, 2023. [39]

Federal Bar Association

Massachusetts / 2010
Cook: Awards Chair (with Rocha), Diversity Chair.
Kesten: Judicial Reception (with Rooney), executive board. [7]

2010 [7]

Leonard H. Kesten

Williams's former attorney.
2010: Judicial Reception co-chair; same FBA chapter as Cook. [7,8]
2019: Named with Erica Brody in consent request. [3]
2013: Curran interview. [22]

Erica L. Brody

Williams's former counsel. [6]
Rising Star: 2020–2021; Top Lawyers: 2021–2022; under-40 honors: 2021. [11]
2023: FBA Spalter award; Forbes list (firm bio). [9–11]
MLW 2023 Lawyer of the Year; list published Feb. 9, 2024. [29]

COOK / WALL: JUDICIAL NOMINATION PROCESS

Chief Legal Counsel review role under Executive Order 500, section 7.0. [2,28]
Cook held that office when Patrick nominated Wall in July 2014. [1,2]
Personal review, recommendation or approval of Wall is not established.

Oct. 28, 2026: allowed special-process-server motion [46]

Joshua I. Wall

Superior Court judge.
Patrick nominated him July 16, 2014. [1]
Signed settlement approval Sept. 28, 2023. [5]

Settlement approval Sept. 28, 2023 [5]

John's prior case involving the Commonwealth

Doe v. Blouin
Middlesex Superior Court
1981CV03788. [4,5]
Commonwealth settlement approved Sept. 28, 2023. [5]

Government party [5,6]

Claimant [5]

John Williams

Former BHPK client and claimant in the underlying case.
Plaintiff in the current action against BHPK. [5,46]

Plaintiff [46]

John's current case against BHPK

Williams v. BHPK
Suffolk Superior Court
2684CV02864
Oct. 28, 2026: special-process-server motion allowed by "Pineault, J." [46]
Specific ruling; permanent assignment not established.

Disclosures and response

2019 consent email: names Huling, Pina and Smith; does not reference the Cook–Donohue marriage. [3]

2022 / 2023 government forms: identify the marriage, BHPK partnership and underlying case; describe recusal, screening and reassignment. [4]

BHPK, Oct. 23, 2026: no disclosure required; neither spouse involved in the DCF action. [6]

Commonwealth / DCF

Government defendants in the foster-abuse case and related settlement. [5,6]

2017: initial approach [13]

Laurence "Larry" Hardoon

BHPK founding partner. [12]
February 27, 2017: Nicole Silberman's email states that Hardoon reviewed Williams's website inquiry; the firm could not get involved and referred him to Carmen Durso. [13]
Documented response: BHPK declined representation at that time.

2018 referral / 2019 fee agreement [14,15]

Kathy Curran

WCVB / Channel 5 News, Team 5 Investigates (at the time). [19,21]
2018: Contacted Kesten (Feb. 20); Williams credited Curran for introduction to Brody (Aug. 6); Brody confirmed records-only representation (Oct. 15). [14]
2019: Contingent-fee agreement sent Aug. 15; receipt confirmed Aug. 22. BHPK formalized representation. [5,15]

HOW TO READ THE MAP

- Blue boxes: John's two cases
- Gold boxes: disclosures / explanatory notes
- Green arrows: family / organizational roles
- Purple: institutional / professional links
- Green boxes: people, organizations, context
- Blue arrows: legal roles / nominations / acts
- Purple arrows: professional affiliations
- Gold: commission funding-review scope

REPORTING CONNECTIONS

Public reporting and documented professional contacts. [18–26]

Kevin Rothstein

WCVB investigative producer (2018-2020). [19,20]
2018: With **Kathy Curran**, investigated **John Williams**'s account. [19]
May 16, 2019: Curran + Rothstein report on **John Williams**'s foster-abuse account. [21]
2020: Emmy recipient credits for Foster Home of Horrors list **Rothstein** as investigative producer and **Curran** as investigative reporter. [20]

With Kathy Curran: reporting on Williams

2004: earlier DYS report

June 3, 2004: Incident at the Paul Leahy Center, Worcester, involving a 13-year-old boy, according to the report. [18]
July 31, 2004: Kevin Rothstein's Boston Herald article, "DYS worker kept job after alleged abuse." Located as a third-party reprint. [18]
John Williams confirms he was the 13-year-old child described in this report. [25] The article itself leaves the child unnamed. [18]

WCVB / BHPK contacts

Mar 29, 2013 report: Curran interviews **Kesten** on Ashland policing. [22]
2018: BC Law's account says **Curran** knew **Kesten** professionally and contacted him about helping **Williams**. [19]
WCVB report updated Aug 13, 2021: Curran covers **Kesten + Erica Brody**'s Holyoke Soldiers' Home lawsuit. [23] BHPK also publicizes the interview. [24]
These sources establish reporting contacts. They do not establish a financial arrangement, legal representation of WCVB, or editorial control by BHPK.

2019 CORRECTIONAL FUNDING

Commission role, sheriff representation and client consent. [30–37]

Special Commission on Correctional Funding

Kate R. Cook | Boston Bar Association appointee

Nov. 5, 2019: BBA appointment announced. [30]
Nov. 15, 2019: Finance Subcommittee member alongside Sheriffs **Kevin Coppinger (Essex)** and **Thomas Hodgson (Bristol)**, among others. [31]
Served through Dec. 31, 2021; then a partner at **Sugarman Rogers**. [30,34]

DOC + all 14 sheriffs' departments [30,33]

Statutory charge: review spending, staffing costs, funding sources and allocations; propose a funding formula and recommendations. [32]
Scope included **Barnstable County**. [30,32]
The **Legislature** retained funding authority. [33]

December 30, 2019: client consent

Erica L. Brody named herself and **Leonard Kesten** as special assistant attorneys general in three **Barnstable** cases: Huling, Pina and Smith. **John Williams** agreed by email. [3]

The email mentions neither the **Cook–Donohue** marriage nor the commission. It refers to an earlier phone discussion; the email alone does not establish everything discussed orally. [3]

Statutory status and limits

Section 101 treated members who were not already state employees as **special state employees** for G.L. c. 268A purposes. [32]
Data access carried confidentiality limits, including restrictions on nonpublic litigation information. [32]
Related provisions: G.L. c. 268A, §§6 and 23; Mass. R. Prof. C. 1.7 and 1.10. [35-37]

Kate Cook / Joshua Wall: nomination-process authority

Documented institutional connection: Cook was Patrick's Chief Legal Counsel during Wall's July 16, 2014 nomination. [1,2] Her July 2, 2014 government memorandum confirms her title.

Executive Order 500, §7.0: recommended candidates were transmitted to the Chief Legal Counsel for review, interview or further due diligence; §§7.1–7.2 address investigation and bar-committee assistance. [28]

Formal appointment authority: Governor, with Council advice and consent — Mass. Constitution, Part II, c. II, §I, Art. IX.
Limit: These sources establish Cook's office and its formal role, not that she personally reviewed, recommended or approved Wall.

TIMELINE • THE UNDERLYING MATTER AND CURRENT CASE

2007–2014
Patrick legal-office service; **Cook**'s later roles; **Wall** nomination. [1,2,39–41]

2017–2019
BHPK decline, referral, records work, then contingent-fee engagement. [13–15]

2019
Commission appointment Nov. 5; minutes Nov. 15; consent email Dec. 30. [3,30,31]

JAN. 3, 2022
Cook's government disclosure identifies spouse and underlying case. [4]

JAN.–FEB. 2023
Cook's disclosure Jan. 26; **Healey**'s determination Feb. 1. [4]

SEPT. 2023
Brody award Sept. 22; **Wall** approves settlement Sept. 28. [5,9,10]

OCT.–NOV. 2023
Pineault nominated Oct. 20; Council vote Nov. 8. [39,43]

OCT. 2026
BHPK response Oct. 23; **Pineault** allows service motion Oct. 28. [6,46]

PRIOR COMMONWEALTH MATTER — John Williams's underlying case and related background sources

[1] State Library: Wall nomination
[2] Cook roles: Harvard (2013) / MLW (2014) · MLW (2014)
[3] Dec. 30, 2019 consent email (private)
[4] Government disclosures: 2022 / 2023 (public-record copies) · 2023 form
[5] Court filing / approval order (supplied copies)
[7] FBA December 2010 newsletter
[8] Kesten biography
[9] FBA award recipient list
[10] FBA convention agenda
[11] Brody biography
[12] Hardoon biography
[13] Silberman email, Feb. 27, 2017 (private)
[14] Curran / Williams / Brody emails, 2018 (private)
[15] Brody emails, August 2019 (private)
[16] Greenwood letter, March 18, 2011 (supplied copy)
[17] Cook: LinkedIn employment history
[18] 2004 Boston Herald article (reprint)
[19] BC Law: Then Came the Reckoning (2025)
[20] 2020 New England Emmy recipients, page 3
[21] WCVB: May 16, 2019 report
[22] WCVB: March 29, 2013 report
[23] WCVB: August 13, 2021 report
[24] BHPK: Curran interview of Kesten / Brody
[25] Williams's personal account (no public link)
[26] Rothstein: verified Muck Rack profile
[27] State Ethics Commission: 2014 disclosure index
[28] Executive Order 500 §7.0: candidate-review role
[29] MLW: 2023 Lawyers of the Year (Feb. 9, 2024)
[30] BBA appointment announcement, Nov. 5, 2019
[31] Commission minutes, Nov. 15, 2019 (DOCX)
[32] St. 2019, c. 41, §101: commission authority
[33] Final commission report, Jan. 31, 2022, pp. 5–6
[34] BBA statement: Cook served through Dec. 31, 2021
[35] Mass. professional-conduct rules (2018 edition)
[36] G.L. c. 268A, §6: financial-interest participation
[37] G.L. c. 268A, §23: standards of conduct

CURRENT BHPK CASE — John Williams v. BHPK: correspondence, judicial sources and assignment context

[6] BHPK response, Oct. 23, 2026 (private)
[38] Cheng email, Oct. 26, 2026: counsel / routing (private)
[39] Governor's nomination announcement • October 20, 2023
[40] Kate Cook's firsthand career account • Harvard Law School
[41] Published judicial biography • Law Diary, page 53
[42] Governor's Office staff • current official listing
[43] Governor's Council meeting archive • November 8, 2023
[44] Superior Court monthly judicial assignments
[45] G.L. c. 212, § 2 • judicial assignment authority
[46] Court-endorsed motion • Williams service packet, page 17

Source notes: [41] Indexed biography; direct PDF retrieval returned 404. [43] Public observer archive, not an official state website. [46] Supplied court-endorsed motion; link provides court-access instructions. The live assignment history was not independently retrieved. Private/personal records have no public link. Relationships alone do not establish improper influence or bias.