The people, the roles, the disclosures

John Williams v. BHPK | Suffolk Superior Court | Docket No. 2684CV02864 [5]

Family / government · Appointments / counsel · Professional roles · **Commission membership** · **Funding-review scope**

Laurie Greenwood

John Williams's foster mother [16,25]

March 18, 2011: Letter to DCF seeking help for her former foster child, **John Blouin**. [16]

LETTER • GOVERNOR AND HEALTH SECRETARY LISTED ON CC

Governor Deval Patrick and Health and Human Services Secretary **JudyAnn Bigby** appear on the CC list. [16]
Kate Cook held a role in his office at the time. [2,17]

CC lists Governor Deval Patrick

KATE COOK TO COMMISSION: BBA appointee + Finance Subcommittee [30,31]

Funding-review scope included BARNSTABLE COUNTY [30,32]

Deval Patrick

Governor of Massachusetts.
Nominated **Joshua Wall** on July 16, 2014. [1]

adviser

nominated 2014

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS
Cook: process oversight [2]
Wall: 2014 nominee [1]
Office's review role:
EO 500 §7.0 [28]

Kate R. Cook

2011-2013: Director of Policy & Cabinet Affairs, **Governor Patrick.**
2013: Appointed Patrick's Chief Legal Counsel; oversaw the judicial nomination process and interviewed candidates. [2,27]
2022: First Assistant AG.
2023: Governor **Healey**'s Chief of Staff. [4,17]

spouses

2010

served under

Thomas R. Donohue

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

partner

BHPK

John Williams's former law firm. Former counsel: **Erica Brody, Leonard Kesten, Richard Brody** and **Samuel Perkins**. [6]

Current counsel: **Edward S. Cheng** and **Luke E. Colomey**, **Sherin and Lodgen LLP**. [38]

2019

partner / former counsel

Sheriff's Office

Barnstable County
Dec. 30, 2019: **Erica Brody** said she and **Leonard Kesten** were Special Assistant AGs for **Barnstable** in **Huling, Pina** and **Smith**; requested **Williams**'s consent. [3]

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

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]

Joshua Wall

Superior Court judge.
Signed settlement approval on September 28, 2023. [5]

approved settlement

Maura Healey

2022: Attorney General.
2023: Governor.
Forms document reassignment and screening of **Kate Cook** from **BHPK** matters, including this case. [4]

screened case

Federal Bar Association

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

2010

represented Williams

Leonard H. Kesten

John Williams's **former attorney.**
2010: Judicial Reception co-chair; same FBA chapter as **Cook.**
2019: Named with **Erica Brody** in consent request. [3,6,7,8]

2013: **Curran** interview [22]

partner / former counsel

Erica L. Brody

John Williams's former counsel. [6]
Rising Star: 2020-21; **Top Lawyers:** 2021-22; under-40 honors: 2021. [11]
2023: FBA Spalter award; Forbes Advisor list (per firm bio). [9,11]
MLW 2023 Lawyer of the Year; list published Feb. 9, 2024. [29]

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]

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]

Commonwealth / DCF

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

party

Underlying case

Doe v. Blouin
Middlesex Superior Court
No. 1981CV03788. [4,5]

claimant

John Williams

Former client / claimant.
Settlement approved September 28, 2023. [5]

DOCUMENTED DISCLOSURES AND RESPONSE

2019 consent request: Names Huling, Pina and Smith; contains no reference to the Cook-Donohue marriage. [3]
2022 / 2023 government forms: Identify the marriage, BHPK partnership and underlying case; describe recusal, screening and reassignment. [4]
BHPK's October 23, 2026 letter states: "no disclosure was required because there was no conflict of interest where neither was involved in the DCF Action." [6]

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.

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]

2017: initial approach

2018 referral / 2019 fee agreement

Laurence "Larry" Hardoon

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

Kathy Curran

Kathy Curran → Leonard Kesten
March 29, 2013 • Ashland police report [22]

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

TIMELINE

2010-2014
Roles, letter + nomination
2010: Cook + Kesten, FBA.
2011: Greenwood letter; Patrick on CC. [16]
Cook: policy role in 2011; chief legal counsel in 2013.
Jul 16, 2014: Wall nominated. [1,2,7,17]

2017-2019
Decline, then engagement
2017: **Hardoon / BHPK** decline.
2018: **Curran** referral; records work.
2019: fee agreement. [13-15]

2019
Commission + consent
Nov. 5: **Cook** appointment announced. [30]
Nov. 15: Finance subcommittee. [31]
Dec. 30: **Barnstable** consent email; marriage and commission omitted. [3]

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

JAN 26, 2023
Cook's 2023 disclosure
Disclosure signed; spouse and **BHPK** matters identified; recusal described. [4]

FEB 1, 2023
Healey's determination
Healey signs reassignment determination; form states screening measures are in place. [4]

SEPTEMBER 2023
Award + court approval
Sep. 22: **Erica Brody**'s Spalter award ceremony scheduled. [9,10]
Sep. 28: **Wall** signs settlement approval. [5]
Six days apart.

OCTOBER 23, 2026
BHPK response
BHPK's response to the demand states that "no disclosure was required" and cites Cook's screening. [6]

Arrows use the citations in their connected cards and identify documented roles or relationships. The plain blue line identifies an institutional nomination-process connection; the cited sources do not identify who reviewed Wall's individual candidacy. Affiliations and timing alone do not establish influence or participation in the 2023 national award selection.

SOURCE KEY

[1] State Library: Wall nomination • [2] Cook roles: Harvard (2013) / MLW (2014) • [3] Dec. 30, 2019 email (private) • [4] Government forms: 2022 / 2023 (public-record copies via StateReference)
[5] Court filing / approval order (supplied copies) • [6] BHPK response, Oct. 23, 2026 (private) • [7] FBA Dec. 2010 newsletter • [9] FBA 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, Aug. 2019 (private). Underlined = public web source; personal/private sources are identified separately.
[16] Greenwood letter, Mar. 18, 2011 (personally supplied copy; no public link) • [17] Cook: LinkedIn employment history (Jan. 2011-Jan. 2013) • [25] Williams's account supplied for this matrix (no public link)
[8] Kesten biography [27] State Ethics Commission: 2014 disclosure index [28] Executive Order 500 §7.0: Chief Legal Counsel's candidate-review role [29] MLW: 2023 Lawyers of the Year (list published Feb. 9, 2024)
[38] Edward S. Cheng email, Oct. 26, 2026: current counsel and communication routing (private; retained original).

ADDED SOURCE LINKS

[18] 2004 Boston Herald article (reprint)
[19] BC Law: Then Came the Reckoning (2025)
[20] 2020 New England Emmy recipients, p. 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
[26] Rothstein: verified Muck Rack profile

Identity source: John Williams's personal confirmation. [25] The 2004 report supplies the incident and publication details. [18] No additional financial or institutional connection was established in the sources reviewed. [19,22-24]

ADDED PUBLIC SOURCE LINKS

[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

[31] Preserved in the commission co-chair's public archive.
[3] Private email reviewed; no public link.
Connections do not establish improper influence, fee benefits or involvement in Williams's settlement.