

Commissioner Nimasheena Burns Bio

Commissioner Nimasheena Burns is Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners. She was born in Durham and hails from Tar Heel, North Carolina. She was elected a Durham County Commissioner in 2020 for a four-year term of which she is currently serving. As a board member, Commissioner Burns is known for championing maternal and infant health, economic development investments, job training and job creation, affordable housing investments, public education, agricultural development, technical assistance for small businesses, environmental justice, as well as wrap around support services for the county's most vulnerable students and seniors. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Communications and a minor in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She holds a Master's in Public Affairs from North Carolina Central University. She is also a graduate of Leadership NC (Class XX), the North Carolina Defense Contractors Academy (Class 2019), The Partnership, Inc. NC Leadership Accelerator (2022) and The NC School of Government Advanced Leadership Corps (2023).

During the most recent National Association of County Counties (NACO) Conference, Commissioner Burns was chosen by newly elected NACO President, to serve as Vice Chair on the Resilient Counties Advisory Board and Vice Chair of the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee's Juvenile Subcommittee. Durham County Commissioner Nimasheena Burns has been selected as one of 13 Elected City and Council Official Delegates for "Local Government 2030: Action for the Future, a National Convening of Practitioners and Elected Officials all under the age of 40 and given the charge to break silos and create groundwork for change.

Statewide she serves on the North Carolina Community College Foundation Board as the Chair of the Nominating Committee, the Board of Visitors for North Carolina A&T State University, the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP) board, the NC Association of Black County Commissioners Executive Board where she Chairs the Technology and Housing Committee and on the board for the NC Museum of Life and Science. In Fall 2023, she was appointed to the General Government Committee of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. In her first year in office, she was unanimously voted for by county commissioners from surrounding counties to serve on the state board the NC Association of County Commissioners.

Locally, she currently serves as Chair of the Joint City-County Panning Committee the Library Board of Trustees, Vice Chair for the Go Triangle Transportation Special Tax Board, on the Carolina Theatre Board, the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, Memorial Stadium Authority and the Durham Workforce Development Board. She has served on boards for the NC Defense Industry Diversification Initiative Advisory Board, the State Employees Combined Campaign, Health Fraud Prevention Re-victimization Project, the USDA Strikeforce Taskforce, Rural Economic Development Loan Enterprise Taskforce,

the NC Recidivism Taskforce, Green Rural Development, the NC Senior Fraud Taskforce (as Staff), the Governors Human Trafficking Commission (as staff) and Governor's Street Safe Taskforce on Recidivism.

Burns currently serves as the External Affairs Liaison for the NC Department of Public Safety. There she manages the External Affairs efforts for a myriad of programs between the agency and local governments. The multi-billion-dollar program in her external affairs portfolio include initiatives that support disaster help for homeowner repairs, rebuilding of homes and affordable housing developments as well as disaster mitigation for local governments with the greatest risk of damage from future hurricanes and flood. During the Covid-19 pandemic she was one of the agency's chief architects for the NC Housing Opportunity and Prevention of Eviction's (H.O.P.E.) equitable application development and process, program launch, strategic utility engagement planning, external relations development and reporting for congressional/national stakeholders and fund disbursement of over \$1 Billion in statewide rental support and eviction prevention funding. A first of its kind in the state.

Before she served as the Director of Communications and Project Management for the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. She managed an economic development partnership for the Department of Defense, entitled the North Carolina Defense Industry Diversification Initiative (NC DIDI). She worked with some of NC's most vulnerable companies to support the diversification of their contract and product portfolio by investing funding in them to increase their work in the commercial sector. Her multi-million-dollar investment program developed the State's First Ever Defense Supply Chain Analysis and aided over 40 small businesses in North Carolina, by building up the value-added production, technology driven market intelligence, their cybersecurity infrastructure, and the additive manufacturing capabilities. She managed a team that developed Cyber Security toolkit and curriculum for the state's defense contractors to fulfill the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) cyber compliance requirements. She also traveled the nation sharing a set of custom designed resources and activities to increase awareness of cybersecurity and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) requirements for small to medium-sized manufacturers (SMM).

She previously served as the Director of Public Affairs, Outreach and Loan Marketing for North Carolina State Farm Service Agency. Served as senior staff responsible for planning, developing, and implementing the crisis communications, grant management, public affairs, media relations community relations, regulatory technical assistance, social responsibility activities and government relations programs. While there she managed the development of operating procedures to assure that initiatives and programs are planned, administered, and disseminated to a wide variety of citizens and media outlets. Directed the statewide software change management initiative Bridges to Opportunity. She was also added as a consultant to the USDA's national team for Customer Relationship

Management and Small Farms Grant Review. She was responsible for studies of social markets, demographics, and internal and external relationship trends, partnership relations, grassroots outreach and interagency coordination that led to FSA's \$327 million investment into NC economy. She was tapped as the USDA FSA state coordinator for Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) to support our states military installations. She led collaborative programs and community engagement/development projects between multiple agencies, and partners in an effort to improve local rural economies that are persistently impoverished. She was detailed as a Congressional External Affairs Liaison for FEMA and USDA for RD, FSA, and CRS during Hurricane Matthew. She was named to the National coordinating team for USDA/White House Rural Council on the Opioid Epidemic where she hosted round tables throughout the southeast on opioid telehealth and center development.

While a Public Affairs and Consumer Affairs Officer at the NC Department of Justice, Burns was asked to serve as a guest consumer analyst for various media outlets and has made over 1000 keynote, presenter, and consultative appearances on the behalf of the agency. Over her almost decade of service to the agency show was a subject matter expert on issues ranging from Domestic Violence and Opioid Abuse to Financial Literacy to Child Internet Safety to Business Identity Theft and Crystal Meth in the Community.

While not a public health professional, after years of watching individuals in her local community both thrive and suffer with Autoimmune diseases, she took note of how broadly kidney failure was prominent in the black community. Nimasheena took a chance and applied for an Albert Schweitzer Public Health Fellowship. She was awarded funding to start to combat and educate families on kidney function and water quality. She used the funding to start the Don't Kid Yourself Foundation, for the early detection of kidney failure. She partnered with UNC Hospital's Kidney Bus to travel to distressed areas in the African American community across North Carolina.

For eight years she served as a member of the Governor's Multi-Discipline Grant Review Team for the state of North Carolina. A few of her award recognitions include, but are not limited to the 2023 North Carolina Central University 40 Under 40, 2021 NC Association of County Commissioner's Board Exemplary Service Award, the 2019 UNC Chapel Hill Harvey Beech Outstanding Young Alumni Award Winner, a 2017 40 under 40 Awardee for the *Triangle Business Journal*, the 2016 *Triangle Business Journal* Woman in Public Policy Award, the 2016 Wells Fargo/Blue Cross and Blue Shield Young Executive of the Year Award, and the 2016 Spectacular Magazine Emerging Leader of the Year.