

Offered by Councilors Ricardo Arroyo and Kim Janey CAMPBELL
BOK, BREADON, MEJIA, FLYNN, FLAHERTY, ESSAIBI-GEORGE, EDWARDS, WU AND O'MALLEY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS AND ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON BOSTON'S LOW 2020 CENSUS RESPONSE RATES AND WHAT PLANS ARE IN PLACE OR BEING FORMED TO IMPROVE THEM MOVING FORWARD

WHEREAS: The 2020 Census will determine the allocation of more than \$16 billion in federal funds that support important sectors like healthcare, education, childcare, and more; *and*

WHEREAS: In the 2010 Census, Massachusetts was severely undercounted leading to 20,000 missed children, the loss of an average of \$2,372 per person that went uncounted, and the loss of a seat in Congress; *and*

WHEREAS: According to a report by Boston Indicators and the Boston Foundation, the City of Boston is the 9th hardest to count city among the largest 100 cities nationwide; *and*

WHEREAS: The 2010 Census counted a total of 695,000 Boston residents but only represented a 64% response rate in the City of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS: As of April 30, 2020, Boston has a response rate of 45.5%, ranking at 298 out of Massachusetts' 351 towns and cities, and falling short of the state and national response rates; *and*

WHEREAS: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census Bureau has suspended field operations and activities until at least June 1, 2020, and has shifted to responses online, by phone, and by mail; *and*

WHEREAS: Children living in low-income communities, ethnic minorities, undocumented immigrants, and the homeless are the most likely to go uncounted in the 2020 Census, but are also the groups that would benefit the most from its results; *and*

WHEREAS: The COVID-19 pandemic has created a situation that will impact revenue sources and likely create significant budget shortfalls, as well as exacerbate already existing inequities experienced by these underserved groups; *and*

WHEREAS: The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for continued funding towards our healthcare system, food insecurity, education, and housing so that people who are traditionally left out get the resources they need, which relies on an accurate 2020 Census count; **THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss and address the impact of COVID-19 on the City of Boston's low 2020 Census response rates and discuss what plans are in place or being formed to improve response rates moving forward; and that the Department of Intergovernmental Relations, Boston's Complete Count Committee, MASSVOTE, community partners, and other relevant parties be invited to testify.

FILED ON: May 1, 2020