

Offered by City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING DISCRIMINATION IN THE METRO BOSTON RENTAL HOUSING MARKET

- WHEREAS*, On June 27, 2020, the Housing Discrimination Testing Program at Suffolk University Law School, Analysis Group, and the Boston Foundation released a study called “Qualified Renters Need Not Apply”; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The study measured levels of discrimination in the Greater Boston rental housing market based on race and income level; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Data from the study showed that landlords and agents discriminate at high rates against Black people and Section 8 housing voucher holders throughout the pre-rental application process; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The study found that 86% of testers who indicated they were using a voucher faced discriminatory behavior from rental agents and that while white non-voucher testers were able to view an apartment 80% of the time, their Black counterparts were only able to visit 48% of the time; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The study found that in the majority of cases, real estate professionals perpetuated the discrimination against voucher holders and Black renters; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Housing discrimination based on race is illegal at both the federal and state levels, and discrimination against voucher holders is illegal in Massachusetts; *and*
- WHEREAS*, A study released in June 2020 by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that Boston has been ranked the third most gentrified city in the country; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The study included several recommendations to reduce voucher and racial discrimination including prohibiting charging broker fees to tenants, increasing penalties and training for real estate professionals, strengthening anti-discrimination laws and fair housing enforcement, and improving the system for using vouchers; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*
- ORDERED*: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the findings of the “Qualified Renters Need Not Apply” study and how to address discrimination against voucher holders and Black renters in Boston; and that representatives from the Housing Discrimination Testing Program, Greater Boston Real Estate Board, City Life/Vida Urbana, Right to the City, Boston Housing Authority, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: July 31, 2020