

Offered by City Councilor Julia Mejia



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO AUDIT HOW THE BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT RESPONDS TO LATINO SPANISH-SPEAKING RESIDENTS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS, Latinos have led Boston's growth since 1980, with a 256% increase in population, and now make up 20% of the city; *and*

WHEREAS, 43% of Latinos in Boston are foreign born and 25% of Latinos have limited proficiency in English and identify another language other than English as their primary language.

WHEREAS, In 2016, the Mayor signed an ordinance to make the City more accessible for people who use languages other than English, and thereby creating the Office of Language and Communication Access (LCA). It is important for officers who work in areas of high Latino concentration to work with the LCA to expand translation of vital documents; *and*

WHEREAS, The majority of Latinos are US citizens, either by birth or naturalization, yet many remain intimately linked to immigration; *and*

WHEREAS, Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, are less likely to contact law enforcement due to heightened fears around disclosure of their immigration status and police involvement in immigration enforcement. This results in an erosion of trust in law enforcement from immigrant and communities of color; *and*

WHEREAS, Although not a panacea, a key way of building community trust is by diversifying the police force, which also improves public safety. The Boston Police Department (BPD) has long failed to reflect the city's population. Nearly 65% of uniformed officers remain white while other minority groups are underrepresented – 21.2% are Black, 11.3% are Latinx, and 2.6% are Asian; *and*

WHEREAS, The BPD needs to incorporate more inclusive hiring and promotion practices in Boston's public safety agencies and build cultural and linguistic capacity to effectively serve Boston's diverse populations; *and*

WHEREAS, The police force is intended to provide protection to all residents regardless of race, class, national origin, or gender. The City needs to conduct an independent audit surrounding issues of diversity, equity and inclusion and unconscious bias in the City's police department; *and*

WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of the Boston City Council to ensure that all residents, including our Latino Spanish-speaking residents, feel safe and responded to by their local police departments, and the best way to do this is by offering transparency into their processes and accessibility to their services and resources in a language members of the community can understand; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to audit how the Boston Police Department responds to Latino Spanish-speaking residents in the City of Boston. Representatives from the administration, including the Boston Police Department, Office of Police Accountability and Transparency, and Language and Communication Access. Lawyers for Civil Rights, Latino Law Enforcement Group of Boston, Neighbors United for a Better East Boston, Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts, Centro Presente, and members of the public are also encouraged to testify.

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