

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, FERNANDES ANDERSON,
FITZGERALD, MEJIA AND MURPHY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ELEVATOR SYSTEM IN BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (BHA) DEVELOPMENTS

WHEREAS: The elevator systems in many Boston Housing Authority (BHA) developments are rapidly aging and require significant repairs. Recent reports highlight extensive problems, with several documented breakdowns causing serious public safety concerns; *and*

WHEREAS: In District 2, over the last few years, tenants have reported that elevator breakdowns are a frequent occurrence at the Ruth Barkley Apartments in the South End, while issues of elevator breakdowns have taken place at both Torre Unidad at West Dedham Street and St. Botolph BHA; *and*

WHEREAS: Residents have reported being stuck in elevators, and elevators skipping floors. Seniors and persons with disabilities have been particularly impacted, as using stairs is not an option for those who are in wheelchairs, use canes and walkers; *and*

WHEREAS: Seniors and persons with disabilities have also expressed their frustrations with not being able to leave their apartments for as long as two weeks due to these elevator failures, resulting in not being able to get basic needs such as groceries as well as missed medical appointments. There are increasing concerns that these conditions violate federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); *and*

WHEREAS: Residents have also expressed that even when elevators are repaired in the short-term, given the frequency of breakdowns, they are afraid to get on in fear that they will get stuck during an emergency; *and*

WHEREAS: It is reported that it takes between \$1.5 and \$5 million to repair an elevator, and the repairs at Ruth Barkley Apartments are expected to cost \$6 million. Repairs often require parts to be shipped from other parts of the country, and this often takes a long amount of time; *and*

WHEREAS: Given the public safety and quality of life concerns for our seniors and persons with disabilities, it is critical for the BHA to have a financial and maintenance plan to address these serious issues. It is imperative that the BHA conducts a comprehensive review and inspection on the status of every elevator in BHA developments, including the repair history of each elevator, the frequency it has been shut down due to failures, and how often first responders have had to visit; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to address ongoing concerns about the safety and reliability of the elevator system across BHA developments and discuss a financial and maintenance plan. Representatives from the Boston Housing Authority and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.