



OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN AND ERIN MURPHY

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE PLACEMENT OF THE CITY OF BOSTON ELECTION DEPARTMENT UNDER STATE RECEIVERSHIP

- WHEREAS:** On Election Day this year, ballot shortages were reported across multiple precincts in the City of Boston. This included certain precincts that ran low or ran out of ballots in Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. A precinct at Savin Hill in Dorchester was also without any ballots for an extended period of time; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Many poll workers reported that when they called the Elections Department to notify them of the ballot shortages, they were unable to reach the Department. This led some of the poll workers to turn away voters when they ran out of ballots and caused unnecessary delays and long wait times for residents. Moreover, phone calls placed by the MA Secretary of the Commonwealth to the Boston Elections Department on Election Day went unanswered; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In the South End, the polling location at Cathedral High School ran out of English-only ballots, although English was also included on the Chinese ballots. The High School location also had poor lighting, which made it challenging and confusing for voters to read the ballot. Voters had to use the flashlight on their cellphones to read the ballot; *and*
- WHEREAS:** As part of the preparation for the November elections, the MA Secretary of the Commonwealth Elections Division printed and delivered 766,200 ballots to the City of Boston, which was confirmed and received by the Boston Elections Department. The ballot shortages on Election Day demonstrated that the Elections Department failed to deliver an adequate amount of ballots to certain polling stations ahead of time; *and*
- WHEREAS:** It is unacceptable that the City of Boston Elections Department was unprepared for an election, especially in a Presidential Election year, when voter turnout tends to be higher than municipal elections. It is also deeply concerning that attempts of election workers to reach the Elections Department regarding the ballot shortages and other issues of concern were unsuccessful; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Voting is a Civil Rights issue and the bedrock of our democracy. The ballot shortages, unreasonable delays, and lack of preparation demonstrated by our Elections Department is egregious and eroded the faith that many residents had in the City's ability to provide basic city services with our elections process; *and*
- WHEREAS:** While the City's initial review found that there was a formula miscalculation within the Boston Elections Department, questions regarding the lack of communication and unanswered phone calls were not addressed; *and*

WHEREAS: In the 2006 Gubernatorial election which elected Governor Deval Patrick - the first African American Governor of Massachusetts, the Boston Elections Department was put under State Receivership after there were ballot shortages in communities of color; *and*

WHEREAS: It is critical that the City of Boston demonstrate the ability to provide basic city services and election preparedness to restore faith and confidence with residents; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the Boston City Council recommends the placement of the City of Boston's Elections Department under State Receivership.

Filed on: November 20, 2024