



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR THE CITY OF BOSTON TO SUBMIT A COUNT QUESTION RESOLUTION OPERATION CASE TO THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU

- WHEREAS,** The federal Census Bureau's Count Question Resolution Operation (CQR) was initiated after the 1990 Census, providing an opportunity for local governmental units to request the review and correction of errors relating to population counts, and is the final operation by which updates to the Census data can be made; *and*
- WHEREAS,** On January 3, 2022, the Census Bureau began accepting and researching case submissions from local governmental units for the Count Question Resolution Operation until the June 30, 2023 deadline, and the Census Bureau will provide results to impacted governmental units by no later than September 30, 2023; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The federal Census Bureau also proposes to allow local governmental units to request the review of population counts specifically for group quarter facilities through a separate program, the 2020 Post-Census Group Quarters Review (2020 PCGQR), a special mechanism developed due to the unique circumstances pertaining to the 2020 Census; *and*
- WHEREAS,** While the CQR Operation will not revise data for the purposes of congressional apportionment or redistricting, official updates to Census enumeration data will inform future population estimates, assure the accurate distribution of federal funds, and provide improved demographic data for policy decision-making; *and*
- WHEREAS,** An accurate census count is instrumental in ensuring that federal funding for education, healthcare, housing and transportation, food and nutrition, and other social services reflect the full extent of the population's need; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In 2010, Boston had the ninth-highest share of people living in hard to count (HTC) Census tracts among the 100 largest U.S. cities, with populations unlikely to return census forms, including renters, students, and recent immigrants; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In the 2010 federal decennial Census, no Census tract in Boston had a self-response rate below 50 percent, but in the 2020 Census, 29 Census tracts had a self-response rate between 30.0 percent and 49.8 percent, with particular tracts containing large numbers of off-campus student populations; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The 2020 Census provided new challenges, including significantly lower federal funding than previous 10-year Census cycles which decreased preparation and outreach efforts, the option of online questionnaires provided a barrier to those without internet access, and the COVID-19 pandemic limited in-person outreach and canceled months of mail outreach; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Additional Census tracts with lower response rates reflected larger shares of foreign-born residents, and issues such as language barriers, mistrust of government, the uncertainty of a citizenship question, and the technological difficulties of responding online, may have contributed to an undercount of these traditionally hard to count populations; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The 2020 Group Quarters Census data reflected 5,000 fewer students than City data analyzed by the Department of Neighborhood Development, likely due to college students who shifted to study remotely during the pandemic; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In mid-March 2020, just before the April 1st Census Day, colleges and universities evacuated their campuses due to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, and the Census Bureau instructed institutions to report their dormitory populations from administrative records for spring 2020; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Allston-Brighton, in particular, is a neighborhood that would be distinctly impacted by an undercount as its residents include large populations of renters (79 percent), college or post-graduate students (28 percent), and foreign-born residents (29 percent); *and*

**WHEREAS,** Analysis conducted by the Research Division of the Boston Planning and Development Agency found that according to the 2020 Census data, “Allston’s population fell by 5.9 percent, with a 40 percent decline in the group quarters population, suggesting that the college dorm population of Allston may not have been correctly counted in the wake of the pandemic evacuation”; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Group Quarters Population concern is also reflected in the enumeration of the City’s correctional facilities, with the Suffolk County Department of Corrections records showing their two facilities housed approximately 500 additional residents than reported in the 2020 Census redistricting data; *and*

**WHEREAS,** On October 12, 2021, Mayor Kim Janey submitted a letter to the Branch Chief of the United States Census Bureau Count Questions Resolution Program, expressing the City of Boston’s intention to challenge the 2020 Census enumeration due to population count concerns related to college student and foreign-born populations; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**ORDERED:** That the City of Boston in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts formally requests the United States Census Bureau to review enumeration of housing counts by 2020 Census tabulation block through the Count Question Resolution Operation; ***AND BE IT FURTHER***

**ORDERED:** That the Boston City Council respectfully requests Her Honor the Mayor appoint an appropriate designee to formally initiate and submit a Census Count Question Resolution case for the City of Boston, according to the process outlined by the Census Bureau, and keep the City Council and the public apprised of the progress and results.