



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**Order for a Hearing on Fiscal Transparency, Equitable Access,  
and Council Oversight in the Expansion of the Museum Access  
Program**

**WHEREAS**, the expansion of Boston’s free museum access program aims to ensure that all children in Boston, irrespective of school choice, can access the city's rich cultural offerings; and

**WHEREAS**, it has come to light that six participating museums were permitted by the Mayor’s administration to forgo their voluntary PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) contributions without prior disclosure to the City Council or the public; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the City of Boston Charter, the Boston City Council holds a fundamental responsibility for fiscal oversight, including the review and approval of the City’s annual operating and capital budgets, and the safeguarding of public resources; and

**WHEREAS**, when significant fiscal decisions—such as agreements to forgo expected revenue—are made without informing the City Council, it undermines the Council’s ability to exercise its Charter-mandated responsibility to make informed, sound financial decisions on behalf of the residents of Boston; and

**WHEREAS**, as the City Council engages in Fiscal Year 2026 budget hearings, full transparency regarding all sources of revenue and any potential reductions is essential to a thorough and responsible budget process; and

**WHEREAS**, the PILOT program ensures that tax-exempt institutions contribute fairly to the costs of city services, and exempting institutions without open dialogue not only reduces potential revenue but also sets a concerning precedent for future public-private agreements; and

**WHEREAS**, Councilors Murphy and Flynn have consistently advocated for equitable access to the museum access program, including filing a resolution on February 28, 2024, to expand eligibility to all Boston families. Despite these efforts, the resolution was referred to committee without action, and a subsequent hearing was scheduled without administration attendance, leaving critical questions unanswered; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to review the administration’s decisions related to the museum access program, the waiver of PILOT contributions, and to examine the impact of undisclosed fiscal agreements on the Council’s budgetary and oversight responsibilities. Representatives from the Mayor’s Office, the Assessing Department, the City’s Budget Office, Boston Public Schools, the City’s Cultural Affairs Office, and the participating museums shall be invited to testify.