

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR FLYNN



## CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

### RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (BHA) ELEVATOR SAFETY COMMISSION

**WHEREAS,** In recent years, aging elevators at Boston Housing Authority (BHA) developments have posed public safety concerns. Residents reported frequent breakdowns, being stuck in elevators, elevators skipping floors, and prolonged periods of disrepair. There are increasing concerns that these conditions violate federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); *and*

**WHEREAS,** Over the last three years, tenants at the Ruth Barkley Apartments in the South End reported frequent elevator breakdowns, with multiple elevators facing long-term outages. In December 2024, residents complained that two of the elevators at the complex had been out of service for a year while another had been operating on and off since Thanksgiving Day. Last year, due to an elevator failure on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving for two days through the holiday morning, many residents at Ruth Barkley apartments were forced to alter and cancel plans with their families - nevermind the inability to go about their daily responsibilities like appointments or picking up prescriptions during that period of time; *and*

**WHEREAS,** On October 16, 2025, the Boston City Council Committee on Housing and Community Development held a hearing to discuss the status of the elevators at BHA Ruth Barkley Apartments. At the hearing, residents shared that the broken elevators have caused them to miss medical appointments, other critical services, and difficulties making it to their bathroom in time. In one instance, it was reported these issues caused a resident to miss most of their child's funeral; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Subsequently, on October 22, 2025, the City Council passed a 17F Order requesting certain information regarding the safety of the aging elevator system at BHA properties. As of December 4, 2025, the Council has yet to receive the relevant information that was requested; *and*

**WHEREAS,** At this time, with continued elevators at BHA Ruth Barkley and other properties across the city, it is appropriate that the City of Boston establishes a BHA Elevator Safety Commission to address the public safety and quality of life concerns caused by the failing elevator systems. This Commission may be composed of representatives from the BHA Task Force, as well as representatives from BHA leadership, the Boston Fire Department, the Inspectional Services Department, the Disabilities Commission, a City Council member, and a representative from the elevator maintenance industry; *and*

***WHEREAS,*** Elevator access is essential for our seniors and persons with disabilities. It is imperative that BHA communicate these plans and protocols in a timely manner to residents, and ensure that residents do not continue to miss critical medical appointments and other daily obligations; *and*

***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:***

That the Boston City Council strongly supports the establishment of a BHA Elevator Safety Commission in the City of Boston.

**Filed on: January 30, 2026**