



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION TO DECLARE MASS & CASS AND IMPACTED
NEIGHBORHOODS A PUBLIC SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH
EMERGENCY AND A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

WHEREAS: Since the closure of the city's Long Island recovery campus in the fall of 2014, and the eventual shutdown of the campsite on Atkinson Street in 2023, the opioid crisis has driven people to the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard and surrounding areas, where those battling addiction can seek methadone treatment or a bed at city-run shelters; *and*

WHEREAS: While the tents are long gone, hundreds of people are sprawled throughout the area every day, engaging in open-air drug dealing, drug use, human trafficking, shoplifting and violent crimes throughout the neighborhoods of South End, Nubian Square, Roxbury, Dorchester, South Boston, Downtown Boston and the Back Bay; *and*

WHEREAS: As of July 2025, as well-intentioned as some of the City's efforts have been, it is wholly appropriate to finally acknowledge that the City of Boston's current plan at Mass & Cass has been an abject failure by any standard. Any reasonable person who visits the area will say unequivocally that what has taken place there on a daily basis for over a decade now - an open air drug market and dealing, public drug use, the trafficking of women, acts of serious violence, public defecation and urination, among others - is completely unacceptable; *and*

WHEREAS: The neighborhoods around Mass & Cass continue to bear the brunt of a humanitarian crisis, and it is impacting the public safety and quality of life for residents and businesses, with piles of trash, including discarded needles and human feces scattering neighborhoods. Neighbors from Nubian Square, Worcester Square, Andrew Square, Blackstone and Franklin Squares all the way to Downtown Boston and the Boston Common continue to share their frustration and fear for their personal and families' public safety; *and*

WHEREAS: More recently in the South End, we have experienced residential and business break-ins, assaults on residents, and drug dealing on residents' stoops. The situation continues to harm our small businesses, nonprofit partners, and the local economy; *and*

WHEREAS: While it is important to remain compassionate to those struggling with drug addiction, the status quo of escalating crime and violence spreading from Mass & Cass cannot continue and requires difficult decisions. We need a zero tolerance when it comes to making arrests for public drug dealing and public drug use, human trafficking, crime and assaults. On public health, it is appropriate to shift to a treatment-first approach. It is long past time to put wish lists aside and make a recovery campus a top priority for the City of

Boston. It is also critical that these services be decentralized and spread out to other locations across the Commonwealth; *and*

WHEREAS: There is an urgent need to reevaluate the current strategies in addressing the public safety, quality of life, neighborhood services, and public health issues related to the situation in Mass and Cass and in the impacted neighborhoods. We need to identify ways to improve the City's response to the opioid crisis, drug dealing activities, and homelessness; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Boston City Council declares Mass & Cass and impacted communities a public safety and public health emergency and a humanitarian crisis.

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