



Boston City Council
ED FLYNN
Councillor - District 2

Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston
One City Hall Square, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02201

Kenzie Bok, Administrator, Boston Housing Authority
52 Chauncy Street
Boston, MA 02111

May 28, 2026

Dear Mayor Wu and Administrator Bok,

An elevator at Boston Housing Authority (BHA) Ruth Barkley apartments failed for almost 22 hours yesterday. This morning, I was on-site with a resident, a disabled, double amputee in a wheelchair, who was not able to get into his apartment to get his medication as a result of the elevator failure. Consequently, he was forced to sleep outside of South Station overnight because BHA did not provide him with a hotel voucher to stay while he could not access his apartment. Reportedly, BHA staff insisted that he call the fire department to carry him upstairs, an option that left him with no dignity.

Thankfully, a neighbor stepped up to pick him up from South Station this morning and retrieve his medication from his apartment. We can not continue to normalize elevator failures at Ruth Barkley apartments and force our neighbors in public housing to sleep outside in a situation that could have been entirely avoidable.

As you know, the Boston Housing Authority was fined \$363,000 (with a reduction to 1%, amounting to \$3,630) as a result of the investigation into the Ruth Barkley Apartments' elevator failures. I'm grateful to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board for taking these public safety violations and quality of life issues involving the BHA seriously.

In light of this troubling incident, I am again respectfully requesting a full investigation into any and all BHA properties with an elevator, including Ruth Barkley Apartments. BHA and its contractors must be held fully accountable for every elevator failure, and all related complaints must be promptly reported to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. Residents have repeatedly shared that these persistent breakdowns leave them feeling unsafe, unwanted, neglected and forgotten. As you know, I have held a City Council hearing the last two years where seniors and persons with disabilities shared heartbreaking stories - being unable to make appointments, pick up medication, or make it to their unit to use the restroom. We all know that is not right and unacceptable.

I advocated for a Boston Housing Authority Elevator Safety Commission to be established and 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. Please note I am offering to Chair this Commission because we can no longer ignore these dangerous public safety issues across the City of Boston.

Sincerely,

Ed Flynn
Boston City Councilor, District 2

CC: Massachusetts Architectural Access Board