

Offered by City Councilor Julia Mejia



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXPLORE HOW TO AMEND
SPECIAL LAW TO EXPAND ACCESS TO THE BALLOT BOX BY
REMOVING LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND ALIGNING WITH THE
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS ACCESS ORDINANCE**

WHEREAS, Constituents have reached out about printing ballots in municipal elections in Haitian Creole; *and*

WHEREAS, Upon further research, it has been discovered that the last time legislation has been passed to broaden the languages on ballots in Boston was with Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2014; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston passed its updated Language and Communications Access Ordinance in 2022, which states that all vital documents be available in the identified City-wide or Neighborhood Threshold Languages; *and*

WHEREAS, Ballots are not listed as a “vital document” under the Election Department, which may be because ballots are controlled under the special law from 2014; *and*

WHEREAS, Accessibility to voting and ability to participate in the democratic process is a vital service the Election Department provides, therefore clearly needing to be made more accessible by removing language barriers; *and*

WHEREAS, Ballots should be made available in the identified City-wide or Neighborhood Threshold Languages to carry out the intent of the Language and Communications Access Ordinance, and it appears as though the only reason ballots do not legislatively fall under the Language and Communications Access Ordinance is because they fall under special law, uplifting the need to amend said special law; *and*

WHEREAS, The City Council has a duty and responsibility to ensure due diligence and update old legislation to align with new legislation, as is the case here with

ensuring that the special law regarding multilingual ballots aligns with the Language and Communications Access Ordinance; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to explore making elections more accessible and ensure that the administration of electoral ballots aligns with the Language and Communications Access Ordinance. This hearing shall include a review of Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2014, the Language and Communications Access Ordinance, and current practices of administering multilingual ballots. Representatives from the Elections Department, Office of Language and Communication Access, other relevant offices, those who speak or work with individuals who speak languages other than English, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

Filed in Council: February 25, 2026