



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS ELDER SCAMMING

WHEREAS: Seniors are frequently targeted by companies that claim to offer the best deal, product, or service in home repair, banking, insurance, utilities and home sales. Often times, these companies are employing predatory sales techniques that mislead or confuse potential customers; *and*

WHEREAS: Seniors, as well as our immigrant neighbors, are particularly vulnerable to scamming and predatory sales techniques for a variety of reasons including language barriers, social isolation, and more; *and*

WHEREAS: The median home value in Boston is \$748,710, and Boston homes values have gone up by 3.7% over the past year making seniors whose homes have substantially increased in value particular targets; *and*

WHEREAS: In August last year, a Boston Police Department Community Alert warned that residents, especially our seniors, were at an increased risk of home improvement fraud. It shared that in past years, “Boston residents have paid tens of thousands of dollars for masonry, driveway paving, chimney, basement, roofing and fence repair; only to be left with worse damage or little to no improvement.” Some seniors were manipulated into paying for repair work that starts off with \$1,500 only to escalate into \$20,000 to \$30,000 in structural costs due to deceitful construction; *and*

WHEREAS: Seniors have the right to age in place and feel safe in their homes and communities without the disruption of exploiters. It is critical that residents recognize the signs of different types of fraud, including the use of phone solicitations, door-to-door solicitations, solicitation with discounts, solicitations through apps, and asking that checks be made out to the individual, rather than the company; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss how we can better protect our senior residents from being victims of fraud. Representatives from Age Strong Commission, the American Association for Retired Citizens, Massachusetts Identity Theft Coalition, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Office of the Attorney General as well as other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 29, 2025