



Boston City Council
ED FLYNN
Councilor - District 2

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Boston Police Department
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Tania Del Rio
Inspectional Services
1010 Mass. Avenue, 5th Floor
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Dr. Bisola Ojikutu
Public Health Commission
1010 Mass. Avenue, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02118

July 29, 2026

RE: Selling of Stolen Goods and Food, including Meat, in the City of Boston

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing today regarding food theft, public safety, and public health. Residents in Chinatown have reported numerous incidents relating to the stealing and selling of food items. As this is a serious public health issue, over the past year, I worked closely with the Boston Police Department to try to raise awareness for Chinatown residents and immigrant neighbors through translated signage near the Chinatown Gate. I also coordinated a meeting with Chinatown residents on this specific issue last year with city officials to coordinate community engagement and outreach about public safety. This afternoon I met with city officials, including Mayor Wu, and highlighted the importance of these issues. As individuals have continued to prey on low-income residents during these challenging economic times, I am respectfully requesting a more coordinated and targeted public awareness campaign from the City of Boston to combat this criminal behavior and the public health risks it poses. Any public service announcements would also be translated into multiple languages to help raise awareness for all communities.

Over the last two weeks, I have observed the selling of meat several times in Chinatown, one which resulted in an arrest Monday night. Stealing food to sell at a lower price is not a victimless crime. Beyond the financial losses suffered by businesses, it also presents a serious public health concern. Perishable foods, including meat and dairy products, must be kept at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit to remain safe for consumption. Yet stolen meat is often being sold on sidewalks during hot afternoons and evenings without refrigeration or any cooling mechanisms, allowing it to thaw and creating a significant risk of foodborne illness. This illegal activity not only harms local businesses but also endangers the health and safety of unsuspecting consumers.

I am respectfully requesting your assistance on this major public health and safety challenge that continues to impact communities of color, low-income residents and immigrant neighbors.

Sincerely,

Ed Flynn
Boston City Councilor, U.S. Navy (Retired)