

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, GABRIELA COLETTA, TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, BREADON, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON THE NEEDS AND SERVICES FOR RECENT MIGRANT POPULATIONS

WHEREAS, The city of Boston, and the State of Massachusetts, has become a beacon of hope for migrant families seeking safety and a better life, many of whom are fleeing unimaginable hardships; *and*

WHEREAS, The state of emergency declared in August 2023 by Governor Maura Healey highlights the urgency and necessity of addressing the state's shelter system where the demand for emergency shelter and services has seen an unprecedented increase; *and*

WHEREAS, The increase in families seeking refuge in our state continues even as Massachusetts' shelters have currently reached a capacity limit of 7,500 families or 24,000 individuals, leading to people being turned away, including vulnerable children and pregnant women;

WHEREAS, Despite a lack of capacity in Boston and most other towns and cities in Massachusetts, these families, over 1,000 in number within Boston alone, have shown remarkable resilience and courage in the face of adversity; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston and Commonwealth of Massachusetts must continue to ensure we are working with our community and government partners like the Immigrant Family Services Institute, the Brazilian Workers Center, and the Massachusetts Migrant Families Relief Fund, established by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and The Boston Foundation, offering support and assistance to these new arrivals; *and*

WHEREAS, Community and state partners have urged the federal government to take action to address this crisis by streamlining the work authorization process and passing comprehensive immigration reform, acknowledging the desperate need of many new arrivals to work and thus empowering them to contribute to our city's vibrant economy and culture; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston's situation is emblematic of the challenges faced by Massachusetts' Emergency Assistance system, which, despite expanding to over 80 communities and adding thousands of new units of emergency assistance housing, is still unable to meet the escalating demand; *and*

WHEREAS, Whereas, by late December 2023, over 350 families were on the state waitlist hoping to find a spot in the shelter system;*and*

WHEREAS, In the spirit of unity and shared humanity, the city of Boston, alongside state and federal partners, must continue to be dedicated to addressing this emergency, including the need for more affordable housing and fair, humane immigration policies; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing on the needs and services for migrant populations and that appropriate individuals and organizations attend including the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement, Mayor's Office of Housing, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Massachusetts Office for Immigrants and Refugees, and others be invited to testify.