

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXPLORE FIRE AND EMERGENCY DISASTER RELIEF SERVICES IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

**WHEREAS,** Every year, fires in residential properties wreak havoc on the lives of families and individuals; *and*

**WHEREAS,** By way of examples, on April 7, 2022 a fire destroyed 13 apartments and displaced over 40 people in Mattapan; *and*

**WHEREAS,** on April 29, 2022, young leaders from the Mattapan Teen Center held a bake sale at Almont Playground to raise money for the families displaced by the fires, most of whom lost all of their belongings in the fire and had difficulty securing alternative housing; *and*

**WHEREAS,** on February 28, 2022 a fire displaced 25 people including two elementary students and one high school student in East Boston; *and*

**WHEREAS,** A GoFundMe page was created by the East Boston community to support the displaced residents, raising \$50,055 by 526 individual donations; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Families and individuals that lack resources and capital, disproportionately our Black and Brown families, have trouble meeting their basic needs upon displacement and often do not have renter's insurance; *and*

**WHEREAS,** All landlords must maintain insurance policies for multi-unit residential buildings that provide for relocation benefits to tenants, and upon written request disclose the name of the insurance company; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Tenants may not be charged rent during the period the unit is uninhabitable and return any security deposit and last month's rent, and must be notified of this benefit at the beginning of the rental period; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Displacement by fire is grounds for priority one status for Boston Housing Authority (BHA) Section 8 and project-based subsidized housing. Tenants should get a copy of the Fire and Inspectional Services reports as proof of displacement; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Priority BHA housing is based on a point system that gives points to applicants where certain priorities are given more points than others are, such as displacement from a fire; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Cambridge has a Fire Relief Fund that residents, public and private entities, and others can donate to in order to assist those facing displacement due to fire; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Analyze Boston's Fire Incident Reporting system includes property and content loss figures but provides no quantifiable data on injury and displacement numbers; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston has an Emergency Assistance Fund for victims of fire or natural disaster that should be connecting victims with clothing, food, health services, and helps cover upfront costs associated with obtaining new housing and be more inclusive of community-based efforts; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss fire and emergency disaster relief services in the City of Boston and ensure that all relief funds are appropriately maintained and funded, and that the Office of Neighborhood Services, Mayor's Office of Housing, Boston Housing Authority, Boston Fire Department, displaced individuals, and relevant departments, government entities, non-profits, and persons be invited to testify.

Filed in Council: May 25, 2022