

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS WAYS TO SUPPORT TENANTS FACING EVICTION AND DISPLACEMENT

WHEREAS: Boston has one of the most expensive rental markets in the nation, with many longtime residents facing the threat of eviction and displacement from our neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS: The Boston Globe Magazine had published an article that highlighted the plight of Boston area tenants who are facing eviction, describing the lack of resources that low income tenants have in fighting their eviction cases in housing court ; *and*

WHEREAS: Evictions disproportionately affect the most vulnerable residents in our City- including low income residents, people of color, immigrants, the elderly- and oftentimes these tenants do not know their rights or have attorneys to represent them when they appear in housing court to fight their eviction; *and*

WHEREAS: It is noted that having legal representation increases a tenant’s chance in staying in their homes, and in San Francisco and New York, legislations have enabled right to counsel for low income tenants facing eviction. In New York, 84% of the tenants assigned attorneys were able to stay in their homes between July of 2017 to July of 2018; *and*

WHEREAS: Currently landlords in Boston start the eviction process by sending tenants a written notice to quit, and the notice period is typically 14 days for non-payment, and 30 days for reasons other than non-payment. Such short notice periods tend to cause stress for tenants, making it harder for tenants to prepare for housing court and find adequate accommodations; *and*

WHEREAS: The City of Boston is working on a variety of measures to address displacement and homelessness, including releasing *An Action Plan to Reduce Evictions in Boston*, which calls for higher production of affordable housing, greater access to resources and legal representation for tenants, and designing early warning protocols for evictions; *and*

WHEREAS: We must continue the conversation on ways to support our residents who are at risk of losing their homes, including potentially using the existing Condo Conversion Ordinance as a roadmap for extending eviction notice periods by one year for tenants who are longtime residents, and two years for residents who are elderly, disabled, and low-income ; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss ways to support residents facing eviction and displacement. Representatives from the Department of Neighborhood Development, Office of Housing Stability, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.