



Offered by City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George

**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING ACCESS TO  
WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS**

**WHEREAS:** First responders are the first to provide aid to those who have suffered a traumatic event and, as a result, are also the first to witness these horrible and tragic events; and

**WHEREAS:** The constant exposure to these events are often physically, mentally, and emotionally difficult for first responders yet first responders largely do not access wellness programs and resources for many reasons; and

**WHEREAS:** There are many physiological and psychological reactions to traumatic events that need to be healthily discharged through physical activity, therapy, and other wellness activities in order to prevent or exacerbate undue stress for first responders; and

**WHEREAS:** Currently, the lack of widespread use of wellness programming means that first responders are at a heightened risk for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder when compared to the general population; and

**WHEREAS:** Firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty - in Massachusetts, the suicide rate for firefighters is twice as high as the state's suicide rate; and

**WHEREAS:** After the Boston Marathon Bombing, the Boston Police Department and the Boston Fire Department formed a partnership with McLean Hospital to provide more mental health services to officers and firefighters; and

**WHEREAS:** Still, many first responders do not access wellness or mental health programs due to shame and stigma as well as fear of consequences for the career should they enter any such program, **THEREFORE, BE IT**

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to learn from the Boston Police Department, the Boston Fire Department, Boston Emergency Medical Services, and advocates to examine the possibilities to expand access to and utilization of wellness programming for all first responders.

**Filed: March 6th, 2020**