

Offered by Councilor Ricardo Arroyo, Mejia, Bok, Breadon and Campbell



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY ONE

HOME RULE PETITION

WHEREAS, On January 7, 2021, Mayor Martin J. Walsh was nominated by President-Elect Joe Biden to serve as the Labor Secretary and, if confirmed, would leave his position before the end of his term; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Charter states that in the event that the Mayor does not complete his or her term, the Boston City Council President shall serve as the acting Mayor until an election is held to elect a new Mayor; *and*

WHEREAS, As currently written, if the Mayor resigns before March 5, 2021, the Boston City Charter would require a special preliminary election and election be held in addition to the already regularly scheduled municipal elections in September and November; *and*

WHEREAS, Organizing and executing multiple municipal elections in a single year would place a large financial burden on the City of Boston, especially during a public health emergency like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; *and*

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic is already expected to have a negative impact on the City's revenue and will continue to require increased investments in critical city services such as public health, housing, food access, and more; *and*

WHEREAS, Requiring Boston residents to repeatedly leave their homes in order to vote in multiple elections in the same year during a global pandemic puts their lives at risk; *and*

WHEREAS, Holding multiple elections within the short time period of one year will create barriers to accessibility, lower voter turnout, and place disproportionate burdens on traditionally disenfranchised communities, such as immigrant, low-income, disabled, Black, and Latinx communities; *and*

WHEREAS, Holding an unnecessary and redundant special election for the position of Mayor of Boston would endanger the health of Boston residents, exacerbate an already uncertain financial future for the City, and contribute to existing inequities often seen in elections; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED, That a petition to the General Court, accompanied by a bill for a special law relating to the City of Boston to be filed with an attested copy of this order be, and hereby is, approved under Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article II, as amended, of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the end that legislation be adopted precisely as follows, except for clerical or editorial changes of form only:

**PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW RE:
AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR IN THE CITY OF BOSTON**

Section 1.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 13 of Chapter 452 of the Acts of 1948, as amended by Section 1 of Chapter 376 of the Acts of 1951, as further amended by Section 1 of Chapter 328 of the Acts of 1996, or any general or special law to the contrary, if a vacancy in the office of the mayor occurs in the year two thousand and twenty-one, the president of the city council shall become acting mayor for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 2.

The provisions of this act shall take effect immediately upon passage.

Filed in Council: January 13, 2021