

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS KENDRA LARA AND TANIA
FERNANDES-ANDERSON**



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF
INEQUITABLE HOUSING CODE ENFORCEMENT AND
BOSTON'S PROACTIVE RENTAL INSPECTION
PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease responsible for approximately 1.8 million annual emergency department visits in the US and a leading cause of childhood morbidity; *and*

WHEREAS, Housing quality is a critical determinant of asthma, particularly for children, with more than 44 percent of the risk of a childhood asthma diagnosis attributable to exposure at home; *and*

WHEREAS, A 2009 report by the United States Surgeon General estimated that household mold and poor ventilation contribute to 21 percent of asthma cases and called for a broad range of efforts to promote healthy homes; *and*

WHEREAS, BIPOC communities have higher rates of asthma which increases the risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19, an infectious disease that continues to impact BIPOC communities disproportionately; *and*

WHEREAS, In April 2022, Harvard University released the results of a 10-year study that sought to assess how housing code enforcement systems in Boston address reports of asthma triggers by looking at reported data from the Inspectional Services Department; *and*

WHEREAS, The aforementioned study found that asthma triggers associated with housing are more common, and municipal government responses to correct them are significantly slower, more frequently overdue, and less likely to result in repair in both racially diverse and low-income neighborhoods in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, This translates to a 17 percent longer median response time, 14 percent higher probability of cases being overdue, and a 54.4 percent lower probability of repair in neighborhoods with the lowest proportion of White residents; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2013, the City of Boston passed the Proactive Rental Inspection Ordinance which implemented a proactive rental inspection program that requires owners of all non-exempt units to undergo an inspection every five (5) years, which is

among the lowest frequency of any city with a proactive inspection program; *and*

WHEREAS, There is an urgent need to strengthen code enforcement systems and programs like Breath Easy at Home and the Proactive Rental Inspection program to protect the health and safety of tenants, particularly the city's most marginalized communities;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the impact of inequitable housing code enforcement and Boston's proactive rental inspection program. Representatives from the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH), Office of Fair Housing and Equity (OFHE), Inspectional Service Department, and other interested parties are invited to testify.

Filed on: January 20, 2023