



**Offered by City Councilors Annissa Essaibi-George
and Lydia Edwards**

Breadon, Bok, Mejia, Campbell, O'Malley, Flynn, Arroyo,
Flaherty and Janey
**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING
SECTION 8 VOUCHER DISCRIMINATION**

WHEREAS: The Section 8 Housing Vouchers were created in the 1970s to help very low-income families find housing in the private market rather than live in public housing; and

WHEREAS: These vouchers are the largest rental assistance program in the country and support approximately 2.2 million households; and

WHEREAS: Section 8 Vouchers provide stable housing to our most vulnerable families and guarantee rental income to our landlords; and

WHEREAS: Because rent has intensively increased in the Boston area and far outpaces the income of a full-time worker earning minimum wage, the Boston Housing Authority changed their policy so that these vouchers would be offered at Small Area Fair Market Rents, allowing families to access more expensive housing in and around Boston; and

WHEREAS: Massachusetts and the City of Boston prohibit housing discrimination based on source of income, meaning that landlords and real estate brokers are prohibited from denying someone housing because they are a voucher holder; and

WHEREAS: Suffolk University Law School, Analysis Group, and the Boston Foundation recently published a study that reported findings from the Housing Discrimination Testing Program, which gathered information on the behavior of realtors and property owners when presented with different kinds of potential tenants; and

WHEREAS: The study found that 86% of testers with Section 8 Vouchers experienced some form of discrimination - they were either screened out or never heard from the housing providers again; and

WHEREAS: Given that Boston is facing a family homelessness crisis and vouchers are one of the best tools we have to stably house our families, it is imperative that the City of Boston enforce our ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on source-of-income and/or determine stronger measures that will protect all of our residents, **THEREFORE, BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the housing voucher program and efforts the City could take to reduce discriminatory behavior against housing voucher holders.

Filed: July 2, 2020