

Offered by City Councilors Julia Mejia and Lydia Edwards



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDER FOR A HEARING ON PUBLIC HEARINGS AS THEY RELATE
TO GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

WHEREAS, According to Rule 34 of the Boston City Council Rules, City Council members may call for input and testimony from the public on any given matter within its jurisdiction, provided that they provide a 48-hour public notice; *and*

WHEREAS, Public hearings are organized in part thanks to the Central Staff of the Boston City Council, who work incredibly hard to accommodate the needs of the City Council as well as members of the public; *and*

WHEREAS, In the year 2019, the Boston City Council held one-hundred forty-eight (148) public hearings, only three (3) of which took place outside of City Hall; *and*

WHEREAS, Although most of the public hearings convened by the Boston City Council in 2019 took place between 9:00A.M. and 5:00P.M., on average, American workers arrive at work between 7:45A.M. and 8:00A.M., working an average of 8.8 hours and the school day in Boston extends between 7am and 4pm; *and*

WHEREAS, According to the New Bostonians Demographic Report, 33.4% of Bostonians speak a language other than English, with 45% of BPS students speaking a language other than English in the home; *and*

WHEREAS, Public testimony delivered in a language other than English is the exception, not the rule; *and*

WHEREAS, Efforts have been made in the past by the Boston City Council to explore the realities of offering childcare at public hearings, something for which cities such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Ithaca, New York have launched pilot programs; *and*

WHEREAS, Data on where members of the public come from in the City of Boston to offer testimony is not currently compiled or released; *and*

WHEREAS, The ability to access public hearings is a crucial aspect of our constituency making their voices heard because they address issues which impact Bostonians from all across the city; *NOW THEREFORE BE IT*

ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to examine the accessibility of public hearings as it relates to workers, parents, and non-English speakers. Representatives from the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools, neighborhood and civic association representatives from across the city, childcare advocacy groups, the ACLU, members of the public, and any other interested parties shall be invited and are encouraged to attend.

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