



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS RESOURCES FOR THE BOSTON POLICE CRIME LABORATORY

- WHEREAS:** The Boston Police Crime Laboratory is a critical part of our Boston Police Department, as its work in processing, examining, and analyzing evidence, such as sexual assault kits, is indispensable to the investigation and solving of crimes; *and*
- WHEREAS:** In 2018, the state legislature mandated that sexual assault kits be tested within 30 days, in order to ensure swift processing of evidence that will bring justice for sexual assault survivors. However, in an annual report by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), it found that half of the kits were not tested within a 30 day window by the BPD Crime Laboratory; *and*
- WHEREAS:** According to the report, the lab received 186 sexual assault kits in FY23 between June 2022 and June 2023, and 93 of which it did not managed to test within 30 days. In FY22, it failed to test 39 of the 144 kits within 30 days, and 24 of the 123 kits in FY 21. By comparison, the State Police Crime Laboratory tested 96% of the 714 kits it received within 30 days in FY23; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The cause of this delay for the BPD Crime Laboratory is listed as “staffing shortage”, and this is an issue has been mentioned in EOPSS reports since it started its annual report in 2020; *and*
- WHEREAS:** It is important that the sexual assault kits and evidence from our sexual assault survivors be processed in a timely manner, and that the Boston Police Department address the staffing shortage at the Crime Laboratory; *and*
- WHEREAS:** We need to examine the underlying causes of the staffing shortage, whether it be related to compensation and benefits level, residency requirements, lack of qualified candidates, or other factors; *and*
- WHEREAS:** We should also discuss any equipment upgrades or new methods of evidence processing that would allow crime lab staff to perform their work more easily and efficiently, and other resources that can help them improve processing turnaround time; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to address the staffing shortage at the Boston Police Crime Laboratory, as well as ways to ensure that the Crime Lab has the appropriate resources to operate smoothly. Representatives from the Boston Police Department and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.