

Offered by City Councilors Julia Mejia and Lydia Edwards



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION URGING THE PLACEMENT OF A BALLOT  
BOXES OUTSIDE HOUSES OF INCARCERATION IN BOSTON**

- WHEREAS,** In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, individuals who are incarcerated for non-felony convictions are still able to cast a vote in elections and are able to list their place of incarceration as their residence; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Common Cause Massachusetts estimates that there are around 595 eligible voters in houses of correction across Suffolk County, a number that is greater than some voting precincts in Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Community activists like Pastor Franklin Hobbs have committed themselves to the work of making ballots more accessible for people in houses of incarceration, but there is so much more that can be done on a city level to make it easier for people in houses of incarceration to vote; *and*
- WHEREAS** On October 14th, 2020, the Boston City Council held a working session on Docket #0643, exploring preparation for the upcoming 2020 elections in September and November, including the feasibility of an all vote-by-mail election due to the COVID-19 pandemic; *and*
- WHEREAS** In this hearing we learned that the city has placed 17 ballot drop boxes across the city, in places that “individuals were familiar with, that would be under surveillance all the time;” *and*
- WHEREAS** Despite being places that are constantly surveilled and that people are very familiar with, no ballot drop boxes have been placed outside of houses of incarceration in the City of Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Although securing and installing the existing 17 ballot drop boxes was a challenge in and of itself--and the Boston City Council commends the work of the Elections Department--the City of Boston has risen to greater challenges in the past and can absolutely find the capacity to fight for more; *and*
- WHEREAS,** We have less than 20 days until the most consequential election of our lifetime, and with less than 20 days, we need to provide ballot boxes, absentee ballot

applications, materials on candidates, and deadlines to every eligible incarcerated voter; *and*

***WHEREAS,***

Equal access to voting is a fundamental civil right and we need to ensure that everyone who is legally able to vote can obtain access to the ballot, and to ballot boxes, in order to make their voices heard; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

***RESOLVED,***

That the Boston City Council urge the City of Boston's Election Department and the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin, to place a ballot box outside of houses of incarceration in Boston, and in doing so, respecting and validating the civil rights of all of our incarcerated friends and neighbors who are eligible to vote.

Filed in Council: 10/16/2020