

Offered by:

COUNCILORS FELIX G. ARROYO AND AYANNA PRESSLEY



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND REPORTING ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- WHEREAS, The month of April is designated Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the United States in order to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence; and
- WHEREAS, There are 34 colleges and universities headquartered in the city of Boston with a total enrollment of over 150,000 students of which over 90,000 reside in Boston, making Boston one of the top cities for higher education in the United States; and
- WHEREAS, The context of "campus life" can create an environment where sexual violence may be tolerated; and
- WHEREAS, According to The Campus Sexual Assault Study Final Report, 1 out of 5 undergraduate women experience an attempted or completed sexual assault while in college; and
- WHEREAS, 1 in 16 undergraduate men experience an attempted or completed sexual assault while in college; and
- WHEREAS, The National Institute of Justice has found that victims of sexual assault are often reluctant to report due to many factors including fear of not being believed, being judged for their actions, and the incident not being considered serious by officials, resulting in fewer than 5% of completed and attempted rapes on college campuses being reported to law enforcement officials; and
- WHEREAS, The *Boston Globe*, in a February 27 story, highlighted that students accused and deemed "responsible" for alleged sexual assaults on college campuses may face little or no consequences for their acts within the campus or criminal sanctions in the community; and
- WHEREAS, Sexual violence causes significant harm in many areas of a victim's life: psychological, economic, social and physical; and
- WHEREAS, When initiated by the victim, allegations of sexual violence should be promptly investigated according to best practices in the field.

#### THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to investigate the city of Boston colleges' and universities' response to reports of sexual violence within their educational communities as well as the support services they provide to sexual violence victims to both ensure, when sexual violence is perpetrated, college victims of such violence have immediate access to evidence and are informed of on- and off-campus support services and legal remedies and that individuals found responsible for perpetrating sexual violence are properly sanctioned.

Filed on:

March 29, 2011