



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

February 1, 2021

Dear Commissioner White,

Congratulations on your swearing in today. We are in a moment where dedicated leadership committed to equity, transparency, and accountability in our police department is critical. We are looking forward to working with you to ensure that the Boston Police Department can implement new practices that will help to keep all our residents, including our police officers, safe and build greater trust between the department and the community.

Last year reignited our nation's movement for racial justice and broad police reform efforts. Here in Boston, residents rose up and made their voices heard, sending emails, calling our offices, and peacefully protesting in the thousands to fight for civil rights. As a Council, we took important steps to increase accountability, transparency, and justice in policing by passing an ordinance to create an Office of Police Accountability and Transparency with a Civilian Review Board and Internal Affairs Oversight Panel, passing an ordinance restricting the use of chemical and kinetic crowd control agents, and adopting recommendations from the Boston Police Reform Task Force. But the work is far from over.

As our city experiences major transitions in leadership with Mayor Walsh's likely departure to the Biden Administration and Commissioner Gross's retirement, we have an opportunity to build new systems of accountability and trust in our law enforcement system, particularly when it comes to investigations into police misconduct.

Most urgently, we are deeply concerned about recent media reports that suggest at least one Boston Police Department officer participated in the insurrection at the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2021. With public trust in government at an historic low, it is not enough to conduct a thorough investigation into any officers who may have participated in that event, but it is imperative that a report of this investigation and its findings be made public -- as it would within the requirements of the OPAT. We believe any City employees who participated in the January 6th insurrection that targeted and threatened the lives of members of Congress, including Boston's own Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, should be terminated immediately. Boston Police officers, who are sworn to protect and serve *all* Bostonians, who participated in that event have no place in our police department.

We hope you are taking every possible step to investigate these reports.

The residents of Boston deserve to know how the Boston Police Department is implementing changes to how it operates to create greater transparency and accountability, which includes how it is investigating its members who may have been involved in the raid of the Capitol.

Today we filed an order for a hearing to discuss progress on the implementation of the Police Reform Task Force's recommendations, including establishment of the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency, as well as local implementation of the police reform bill passed in the State legislature.

As demonstrated by the thousands of Bostonians who marched and advocated for police reform over the last year, our residents are counting on us to act with urgency and intention to transform our policing system to be more just, accountable and transparent. We are ready to work in partnership with you, with all members of the Boston Police Department, and most importantly, with the people, to get these important legislations implemented.

Sincerely,

Andrea J. Campbell
Boston City Councilor, District 4

Julia Mejia
Boston City Councilor At-Large