



Boston City Council

BENJAMIN WEBER

Councilor – District 6

Statement from Councilor Weber Regarding Recent Reporting

I ran for the City Council to work for my community and sought the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee in my second term because it is simply the best way to learn how the City works. What I have learned, however, is that some will try anything to derail constructive work on a budget Boston needs, if they believe it will benefit themselves politically or embarrass the administration. What started as obstructionist calls for rejecting the budget and angry confrontations with activists have recently turned into disingenuous political attacks designed to smear me and my wife.

It is true that my wife works for a wonderful non-profit in Boston, International Institute of New England (IINE), that provides vital services to immigrant communities throughout the region. While I am very proud of my wife's work, I have never even attempted to use my position on the Council to direct resources to her employer. And it is totally absurd to suggest that I sought to be the Ways and Means chair to ensure City funds went to IINE.

The latest bald accusation is that a January vote by the Boston Planning and Development Agency regarding IINE's lease was somehow influenced by my appointment as chair to a committee on the City Council. BPDA acts independently from the City Council and, in fact, I had no idea that any such vote had taken place before it was publicized in a rage-bait post on social media today.

As a practicing attorney for 18 years, I always worked to uphold the highest professional ethical standards. That is why, before this budget season, I was in regular contact with our City Council attorney, Corporation Counsel, and the State Ethics Committee to ensure that my actions raised no ethical concerns because of the work my wife does. I was repeatedly informed that because any grants to IINE are governed by a formal, independent bidding process pursuant to state and local law, in which I have no involvement, there was no possible conflict due to the long string of steps (and people) between my vote on the budget and any potential grants that might eventually be issued to IINE.

I proactively reached out to the State Ethics Commission again on Monday morning, and was issued written guidance about how to run an amendment process that eliminates any possible appearance of a conflict, and out of an abundance of caution, I am following that guidance by bringing forward an \$8.2 million amendment package to the floor without any funding for grants to be distributed by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement (MOIA). Pursuant to the Commission's guidance, I will recuse myself from any discussion or vote to add funding for MOIA, at which point I can return to the floor and vote on an overall amendment package.

The residents of Boston deserve an effective and accountable City Council, one that rises above stunts and theater. I am committed to working with anyone willing to help deliver a budget that meets our residents' needs without mortgaging our children's future.

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