

Yet another election in 2021 would not serve Boston well

Testimony of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau

Before the

Boston City Council's Committee on Government Operations

January 26, 2021

RE: **Docket #0155**, *An Act Relative to the Office of the Mayor in the City of Boston*

Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Flaherty, and Members of the Committee (Councilors Arroyo, Baker, Mejia, O'Malley and Wu), my name is Pam Kocher. I am the President of the BMRB and I am also a city resident. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to Docket #0155, An Act Relative to the Office of the Mayor in the City of Boston.

The Research Bureau concurs with the arguments presented in Docket #0155 against holding a special preliminary election in 2021 if Mayor Walsh resigns before March 5, 2021 in addition to the already scheduled municipal elections in September and November for the position of Mayor.

I would like to highlight several concerns:

- The additional financial and operational burdens on a City already challenged to meet our community's ongoing need for increased services and support related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The risk of low voter turnout, and thus reduced civic engagement, at a pivotal time for our community and city government, in part due to resident concerns about in-person voting during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as voter fatigue if 2021 included four trips to the polls.
- The unavoidable disruption to city government function and service delivery to the community if the City experiences multiple leadership transitions in a single year when consistency in leadership vision and action are necessary to effectively address the public health crisis and its impacts on our community. We all know there are challenges acclimating to any new job, any new role, even if one has closely observed and assisted a predecessor in action.

Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions.