

August 14, 2017

Mayor Martin J. Walsh
1 City Hall Square, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02201-2013

Re: Public Safety Concerns in the Boston Common

Dear Mayor Walsh,

On behalf of concerned Boston residents – including racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities – the **Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice**, the **Anti-Defamation League**, the **Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers (MAMLEO)**, the **Boston Society of Vulcans**, **Sociedad Latina**, **Hyde Square Task Force**, and **Centro Presente** respectfully write this letter to express public safety concerns surrounding a rally scheduled to take place at the Boston Common on Saturday, August 19 at noon.

In light of three deaths and 35 injuries at a similar event this past weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia – which was slated to feature several of the same speakers as the Boston rally – the proposed August 19 rally should not move forward until the City has enough time to develop a comprehensive public safety and emergency response plan. *See Three Dead, Dozens Injured After Clashes at Virginia Rally*, New York Times (Aug. 12, 2017), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/08/12/us/12reuters-virginia-protests-casualties.html> (“At least three people were killed on Saturday and 35 injured after protests turned violent in Charlottesville, Virginia, as white nationalists protesting plans to remove the statue of a Confederate general clashed with counter-demonstrators and a car ploughed into a crowd, officials said.”).

A safety plan is critical in light of the urban conditions associated with the Boston Common and surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to rallying on the Common, the organizers of the Boston event have stated publicly that they intend to march through the streets of Boston, on a route that passes by the Massachusetts State House, Boston City Hall, Faneuil Hall, and the New England Holocaust Memorial, among other major sites.

See

<https://www.facebook.com/BostonFreeSpeech/photos/a.1699074217059442.1073741828.1699070680393129/1731486427151554/?type=3&theater>.

Any violence that erupts in the Boston Common or on the busy city streets would directly affect the heart of the city, including the downtown residential and commercial core. Since the Boston Common lies near major public transit hubs, including two subway stops directly in the park and additional subway stops on the proposed march route, violence could easily spread city-wide. The Boston Common and nearby neighborhoods are also unusually busy in August because of peak tourist season. In light of these unique circumstances, it would be prudent for the City to take time to develop an appropriate safety plan, and to release pertinent information about the safety plan to the general

public, including concerned residents represented by the undersigned organizations.

Finally, we jointly request an emergency meeting with you and the City's relevant public safety officials to discuss this urgent matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
and Economic Justice

Anti-Defamation League

Massachusetts Association of Minority Law
Enforcement Officers

Boston Society of Vulcans

Sociedad Latina

Hyde Square Task Force

Centro Presente

Cc: Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey
City Council President Michelle Wu
City Councilor Michael Flaherty
City Councilor Annissa Essaibi George
City Councilor Ayanna Pressley
City Councilor Salvatore LaMattina
City Councilor Bill Linehan
City Councilor Frank Baker
City Councilor Andrea Campbell
City Councilor Timothy McCarthy
City Councilor Matt O'Malley
City Councilor Tito Jackson
City Councilor Josh Zakim
City Councilor Mark Ciommo