Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining. We'll give it a couple minutes, just because I know
activities period starts at 1:05, so students will be trickling in as it gets closer to
that. But, thank you everyone for joining us. Happy Earth Day to everyone. While we're
waiting, if everyone wants to introduce themselves in the chat and because it's earth day, if
you want to share your favorite outdoor place anywhere, can be in Boston, can be in over
the world, in the country, wherever, to celebrate earth day.

All right. So, we're going to get started. It's 1:05 now, and I'm sure students will
be trickling in. I want to just start by thanking everyone for joining us today. My name's
Elizabeth,
I'm a junior, she/her pronouns, and I am a Suffolk Votes Ambassador, and I'll pass it
to Syeeda to introduce herself.

Hi, I'm Syeeda. I'm a freshman, and I also use she/her pronouns. And
I'm a Suffolk Votes Ambassador.

So, thank you everyone for coming, and we want to give a special thank you for
everyone
who joined this event, and our co-sponsors, thank you to the CAS Honors Program, the
Center
for Student Diversity & Inclusion, SGA, Suffolk Women in Government, the Political
Science
Department, and the Suffolk Democrats, and also a special thank you to City Councilor
Flynn and Vanessa, for joining us today. We hope today will be a starting point for
students
to connect with the government, in Boston's government in particular, and to learn more
about how it functions. So, City Councilor, Ed Flynn, he represents Boston's second
district,
02:58 which includes Suffolk Campus, also includes parts of Beacon Hill, Chinatown, South Boston
03:04 itself. And, he served as the City Councilor since 2017 and he's the chair of the city
03:10 and neighborhood services. And so, we're so appreciative to have him here today, and we're
03:16 looking forward to getting to know him better.
03:20 So, just some goals that keep in mind today. So, we invited here the Councilor Flynn, to
03:31 be with us because it's important for constituents to have relationship with their elected representatives
03:37 and to promote accessibility of local officials. We tend to hold them to a higher status, but
03:43 really their job is to listen to their constituents and act based on their needs. It's important
03:48 secondly, to be aware of the different policy positions your elected officials take on various
03:55 issues. You want a representative who will present your values and to be vocal about
03:59 certain issues important to you. And then our last goal is, one of our goals at Suffolk
04:05 Votes is to encourage students to participate with the government beyond voting, and to
04:10 build a relationship with our representatives. Because, once you establish connection, you're
04:15 more comfortable with reaching out and advocating for the issues you care about. So, I will
04:20 pass it to Syeeda, to go over just a couple of rules we have.
04:23 So, these are some of the ground rules for today. We will first be asking questions that
04:31 were already submitted, but we will open up the floor for questions later on. So, just
04:37 keep in mind to be respectful. We all know what that means to be respectful of one another's
04:43 opinions, even if it is different from your own. Also, keep in mind today's goals, to
04:49 just get closer to your elected representative and to get to know them a lot more. Also,
04:56 one mic, don't talk over one another. We also have a chat function, so if you do want to
05:00 comment on things respectfully, just use the chat. Also, be mindful of other peoples’ time,
05:06 make sure that you're not taking all the time to ask only your questions, let others participate,
05:11 and also step up step down, which is the same thing. Be respectful, ask questions that pertain
05:17 to today's subject, and just have fun. We're really, really excited that you're here and
05:21 willing to get more involved.
05:26 Awesome. Thank you. So now, we'll pass it to Councilor Flynn, to just briefly introduce
05:30 himself and talk a little about his district and his job. So, we'll give it to him to take it away.
05:38 [City Councilor Ed Flynn] Well, thank you, Elizabeth. Thank you, Syeeda and Adam, and the entire team here at Suffolk.
05:48 The students at Suffolk, thank you for the opportunity to be here with you. And I also
05:53 wanted to say thank you on behalf of Vanessa Wolf from my team, as well. We're glad to
06:00 be here and talking about government, how it works. As Elizabeth mentioned, I represent
06:06 district two, which includes Suffolk University campus, includes South Boston, the South End,
06:14 the Bay Village, Chinatown, parts of Beacon Hill, where you are, parts of Back Bay. I
06:21 believe that engagement with my constituents, is one of the most important parts of my job.
06:27 So, I'm very grateful for what you are doing here in organizing this important meeting.
06:33 I'm in the community all of the time, I try to build positive relationships with residents,
06:39 with community organizations in my district, by attending, hosting events across the district.
06:48 One issue that I focus on as I relate, and answer questions, and engage residents, it's
06:56 just a little bit about my district. It's probably the most diverse district in the
city, there's nine district city councils. I represent the largest number of residents that live in public housing of any district in the city. I also represent the largest Asian community of any district in the city. I also represent, I believe the second largest Spanish speaking district in the city. I think I also represent the largest immigrant district in the city, and a proud to represent that diverse district. Language access is a critical issue. It's probably the number one issue I focus on in my job as a district city counselor. Because of the diversity of my district, it is critical for me to communicate with my constituents, and them to communicate with me. And, I can only do that with dedicated and professional staff that I have, that work for me, including Vanessa. We communicate in Cantonese, we communicate in Mandarin and we communicate in Spanish to our constituents. And, I specifically wanted a diverse team on my staff, that could communicate in various languages that could relate to and understand the immigrant voice in our city. Of the five people on my team, four of them are women of color, and four of them are immigrants. And I specifically wanted that because I wanted to stress the important role immigrants play in our city. They've helped build our city. They've helped build our country. And, I had the opportunity to serve 25 years in the United States Navy in difficult environments and hazardous environments across the world, including the Middle East and other difficult areas. And, I've seen immigrants serve with me in harm's way. I've seen members of communities of color serve with me and harm's way. And I look at the rise of hate crimes in our city, in our country, especially hate crimes against
09:54 the Asian community, and here they're serving in harm's way, in the United States Military.

10:04 And then we come back to the United States, and they're a victim of hate crime or their
10:09 parents, or the grandparents are victim of hate crimes of bullying, intimidation.

10:16 So, those are issues that are important to me, the Chinese community. Many of you study
10:24 the immigrant role in our city and country, the Chinese community, along with the Irish
10:30 immigrants, built the transcontinental railroad, connecting the country. And I just say that
10:38 as an example, we see that famous photo in out of Salt Lake City when the railroad was
10:44 completed, hundreds of people in the photo and not one Asian person is in the photo.

10:51 And what did our country do after the Chinese built the railroad? We excluded them from
10:58 coming into the country. The Chinese Exclusion Act. So, I say that, because I'm proud to
represents
11:05 an immigrant community, and I fight for my residents, I advocate for them, and I don't

11:14 let anyone try to disrespect or intimidate my constituents, and I don't tolerate any

11:22 of that. Thank you, and I hope that's helpful answering to the first question.

11:30 [Finn] Yes. Thank you. So now, we will open it up for the rest of our questions. So Syeeda

11:40 and I will take turns, if anyone else has any questions, if you want to put them in the

11:44 chat and hopefully we can get to them at the end. And our first question is just a general,

11:51 can you explain how the city government works? How do laws get passed? How do the

committee

11:57 process work? Can you just give us a general overview of how the policy process works at

the city level?

12:05 [Councilor Flynn] Yes, that's a good question. Boston, just especially for our students in
government,

12:11 it has a strong mayor system. So, the mayor initiates a lot of policy and has a lot of
power, but the council also initiates. A lot of the regulations and laws need to be passed by the council in order to be in effect. So usually, the mayor or the council will file a new ordinance or a home rule petition, but we also need approval from the state on a home rule petition. So basically, if we want to change the City Charter or make changes to the charter in the city, it has to be passed by the city council. It has to be approved by the mayor, home rule petition, and then it has to be voted on, by the legislature and signed by the governor. That's how law is passed in our city. But certainly, the mayor and the council have an important role in regulations, in policy on various departments and city agencies, including the Boston Police, Boston Fire, Office of Immigrant Advancement, Office of Food Access, and certainly the Public School system. So, the mayor's team works closely with the city council, but also with the residents. And that's an important part of it, is hearing the voices, and concerns, and frustrations and challenges of residents across the city and trying to implement policy change to address those issues.

Thank you for that. And then I'll pass it to say Syeeda, for the next question.

The next question is, Suffolk has a large number of commuter students who rely on public parking in order to drive to campus. As chair of the City and Neighborhood Services, you work on parking in the city. How are you working on improving parking and transportation for students in the city?

It's a very good question. It's a major challenge we have certainly, parking, traffic, pedestrian safety is a critical issue that I focus a lot on. But we work closely with the Boston Transportation Department, on improving our traffic infrastructure, communicate to them
from residents about what their ideas are on improving parking and transportation issues, including bike access and pedestrian safety. We also have a Planning Transportation Development Committee on the City Council, which works with the Transportation Department with the Boston Planning Development Agency, which is the old BRA and the Zoning Board. And all those agencies have a direct impact on parking and transportation. But, just on parking and traffic and pedestrian safety, the 25 mile an hour speed limit, and our city is too fast. I know exactly where your college is, and can you imagine driving down Beacon Street going by the State House, driving 25 miles an hour and expecting to stop in a crosswalk when an elderly person is walking, or a person with disability as walking? It's almost impossible to stop.

So, I think we need significant drastic infrastructure improvements on pedestrian safety related issues. And, we need to desperately lower the speed limit with strict enforcement, zero tolerance for any car. I even think, going from 25 to 20 is not enough. I think it's 15 miles an hour that we need in this city. I've said it many times, I've held hearings on it. And I've had a little child in my district, was hit by a car and killed. The first several months when I started, it wasn't a speeding related issue per se, but the cars in our city of going too fast, and we need a dedicated Boston Police section that deals specifically with traffic enforcement to deal with that issue. But, it's something that I continue to work on. We make improvements, but not enough. More work needs to be done.

[Finn] Thank you for that. I will say pedestrians in Boston are not afraid of crossing. So, our next question is, Suffolk provides two years of residential housing for students.
The majority of students who live on campus are either out of state, or they live too far to commute to campus. Many upperclassmen have to find off-campus housing. Boston is the fifth most expensive city in the country for renters. As a member of the Housing and Community Development, how are you working to improve the cost of housing to make it more affordable in Boston?

Yeah, that's another good question. I've worked and advocated with residents who are facing difficulties in their housing situation. Worked with organization that you might be familiar with, the Chinese Progressive Association, to prevent displacement, especially for our immigrant neighbors, low-income residents, seniors, persons with disabilities. I strongly support rent control. I know many people don't support it, but I support it. I support measures that would help build affordable housing in the city for low income working families.

I'm a strong supporter of public housing. Boston Housing Authority, plays a critical role in our city, in my district. I've held hearings on ways to discuss what the city can do to face eviction and displacement and short-term rentals. We need to continue to watch closely about them, especially at this time, they are checking precious housing stock away from our city.

But, what I've advocated for is, removing investing units in opposing these executive suites basically, that are nothing but de facto hotels, in my opinion, they're not regulated. They're also taking away jobs from people that work in the hotels, and many of them are immigrants, and many of them are women. Many of them are from communities of color and they're my constituents. So, I fiercely advocate for them, and I don't want to see
them lose their job because someone wants to open a 25-unit de facto hotel. And I'm going to challenge the Zoning Board, when someone needs approval every time, and I'm consistent about that. And, when we see these short-term rentals go up, that are hotels, what we're saying is that the voice of immigrants doesn't matter in this city. Because, when we open these de facto hotels, and that means someone is not going into a traditional hotel, and that's a job for someone that desperately needs that income to support their family. And those are good jobs, they're good wages, they're union jobs. And again, they're women, they're communities of color, and it's a pathway to the middle class. And that's what I strongly advocate for, and strongly believe in. And, I strongly support organized labor and having residents impact policy decisions on, one housing and economic justice issues as well.

[Councilor Flynn] Thank you. The next question is, Boston is one of the most racially segregated US cities. With the recent rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans, along with more visibility of police brutality taking place, how do you plan to create a more equitable city environment?

I think a big part of it is, speaking out as an elected official that represents a large immigrant community, but even more importantly than speaking out is listening to voices of immigrants, listening to voices of the Asian community, continuing to engage them. During this pandemic, my constituents were victims of bullying, intimidation, and I held the first public meeting on the Coronavirus in the country. And I had that, certainly in New England. I would like to see if that's an accurate statement. I had it in January.
21:56 2020. I had a public meeting about Coronavirus at the Josiah Quincy School. Many of you know
that school as well. And what's interesting, what the big takeaway for me was, a young Asian high school student from Boston, and she attends Boston Latin, and she got on the train.

This is when Coronavirus was just becoming prevalent in the media, really. This young student at Boston Latin would get on the MBTA train. And when she would get on the train,

the white commuters on the train would get off the train, and moved to the other side of the train, to not be with her, or be near her. And this really impacted her and her family. It impacted everybody in the room, but my takeaway is, people identified this young student who's doing her best and whose family is comes from China, but people identified this young student with Coronavirus. And then, we saw it throughout the country, Asians being intimidated, beat up, bullied. And I've consistently advocated in support of the Asian community,

but addressing crime issues.

And I've probably been the first person, maybe in the country to talk about Asian violence during this pandemic. And, I don't say that to give myself credit. I only say that because I take this job very seriously. And I represent my constituents, the best I can. And, when I think someone's being intimidated, or I think someone's being bullied or disrespected,
especially someone that may not speak English, they may not be here legally, and that's not a reason for someone to intimidate anybody. So, I'm going to consistently continue to advocate against hate crimes. And, my father was the mayor of Boston at one point, and
he started the Human Rights Commission, and that Human Rights Commission in the city was a way for the city to discuss hate crimes, and document hate crimes, and investigate hate crimes. And, it's been non-existent, to be honest with you, for 15 years and Mayor Walsh brought it back to existence, for a long period of decline, but it can play a critical role in this city. And that's something I want to continue to work on is, beefing up hate crime, the staff on the Hate Crimes Commission, but also education, public awareness about respect and dignity for all people, especially for people that are immigrants, that might be here under very difficult circumstances. During this challenging time, they might have difficulty getting food. They might have difficulty paying bills, but that's even more of a reason why government has to support them during this pandemic and in as we go forward.

[Finn] Thank you for that. And as you mentioned, you're the son of a former Boston mayor. So you probably grew up inspired to pursue a career in public service. So how do you persuade the next generation of Bostonians to engage with their communities and potentially pursue a career in public service like you did?

[Councilor Flynn] Yes. I have a difficult time answering that question because, although my father was the mayor, I didn't necessarily plan on being in government. I got off to a late start in government. I'll be 53. So, I'm only my third year. So, I'm late getting into elective office, but I don't necessarily think you have to be in politics to just help people, and you can make a difference. And, as I mentioned, I was in the military, but I was also a probation...
27:22 officer at Suffolk Superior Court, which is right here right next to you guys. So, I work
27:29 with people coming out of jail, I work with people coming out of prison on Reentry
Initiatives.
27:36 And, CORI Reform is something that's important to my constituents, but important to the
city,
27:44 to residents of the city. But I just highlight that as an example that, there's a lot of
27:51 ways to get involved in government without running for office.
27:57 But one of the things that you're doing right now is critical, is learning about government,
28:03 learning how it operates, learning about people, learning about issues and seeing what's
best
28:11 for you as you go forward from your college education, whether you go to graduate
school,
28:18 whether you are interested in government, interested in nonprofits, but there's a lot
28:23 of opportunities, including running for office for you all eventually, if that's what you
28:29 want to do. But, just want to let you know that, getting involved in your neighborhood,
28:37 in communities is so vitally important and trying to mentor young people, whether it's
28:44 as a youth sports coach, or as a tutor. And, that's what government to me is about.
28:55 [Rahman] Awesome. Thank you so much. So, we have a question from another person
saying today
29:04 is Earth Day, and I'm wondering what are some of Boston's major climate initiatives that
29:09 are currently underway, and what do you think Boston can do to be an even stronger leader
29:14 in becoming climate conscious city?
29:18 [Councilor Flynn] That's, that's a great question. I think as the city continues to build,
especially during
29:25 this pandemic, and planning and development, we need to make sure that climate
resiliency
29:34 plans are built into RFIs, request for information, when projects are announced by the BPDA or

29:45 the Development Community, there has to be a climate justice aspect to all development and planning in the city. And, issue that I would like to highlight that might be very direct and close to you, and it certainly impacts you, because I know many of you live in the Downtown area, in the Beacon Hill area, and you go to school here and you visit, I know many of you visit Chinatown also, at least once a week, because it's right down the road from you. But, there was a group called, if I'm getting the name incorrectly, it's called the Union Society of Scientists, and they had a study out and I talked to them and read this study. But, the Chinatown community, which is down the road from you, has the highest rate of asthma of any neighborhood or town, in the state of Massachusetts.

30:53 So, we talk about climate justice. There it is right there, right down the road from us. And, here we have a community that's in a school, and you guys know what Josiah Quinsy School is, right? Right on top of the Mass Pike or next to it, I should say, on the Mass Pike, on a highway system, down the road from the South Station Bus Terminal, where the buses run all day in the terminal. As you guys know, from the fumes, we have the Amtrak Train Station. We have the direct truck route basically from Maine to Florida, from 9395, going up to Maine. But, we understand why that the Chinatown has the highest asthma rate, because the residents are breathing in those fumes, all day long.

31:51 And, we are building a brand new public high school, a new Josiah Quincy High School, but

32:06 I don't pretend to be an expert on architecture or design, but I insisted that, when we were planning the school, that we address the high asthma rate in Chinatown, and what infrastructure
changes, physical changes, can we make to that building to make it more healthier for
our children, for our students. So, that's just an example of what I think of when I
hear about the environment of climate justice. I try to relate it directly to the impact
it has on my constituents, my residents. And I try to make a difference in that immediate
area. I can't control everything in this city. I can only do so much, but I do know that
I can have an impact in my district.

And, if I have the ability to influence policy, I take that opportunity. And I don't accept
no for an answer from anybody, on issues that impact my constituents. And if I get no on
issues, I'll go right to the top. I'll go to the mayor because, my constituents expect
me to advocate for them, and for their quality of life, because wealthy people in other
neighborhoods can call directly to the mayor. If they're in the business community, or they have influence,
they can get things done through their attorneys. But my constituents can't do that in public
housing or the immigrant community or communities of color. They can't just pick up the
phone and contact the mayor, but I can. And so, I insist, and sometimes I demand that we look
at things differently, what impacts residents in my district, and we looked at things that
impact immigrants in my district. And, I don't speak for all my councilors, but I don't like
accepting no from anybody in City Hall.

Thank you for that. To be cognizant of time, we're going to move to some questions
that were asked in the chat. So, the first one is, respected Councilor Flynn, you mentioned
that you're proud to represent the most diverse area in Boston. My question is, serving a
melting pot of people, how do you cater to everyone's needs? Is it challenging to keep
things equalized between different groups of people?

Yes. It's very difficult. It's very challenging. It's hard to do. It can be frustrating at times. I can get frustrated at times as well. But, to answer your question directly, it's challenging. It doesn't always work. But, government and politics, as you know, it's about compromise. And, I don't pretend to have all the answers, but what I try to do is listen to people. And I rely on my staff a lot because, I can only communicate in English and my staff can communicate in Cantonese, and they can communicate in Mandarin and Spanish.

And they have a different life experience than I do. Vanessa has a different life experience than I do, and Sophia, and Ana, and Melissa, all do. So, I rely on them. They're younger than I am. They have a different view of the city and different view of the country, maybe than I do. So, I try to learn from them. My wife and I have two children. I try to learn from my wife, Kristen, I try to learn from my daughter, who's a college student, and my son who is a high school student. So, I try to listen to people.

Thank you so much for that answer. The next question in this chat that I'm seeing is from Stephen. What changes do you see occurring in the city going forward post pandemic, changes in office space, new public health measures, or anything along those lines?

Yeah, first of all, thank you, Stephen. And that's my son's name is Stephen. And he spells out the same way you do, S-T-E-P-H-E-N. So, I like how you spell it as well. So, let me just talk about public health. It's an issue that I didn't study growing up, or I didn't study when I came to the city council, but it's probably the issue that I study the most, and I enjoy the most. And, it's an issue that impacts everybody, but again, especially the
immigrant community and communities of color, and access to quality health care is a civil rights or human rights as far as I'm concerned. And, I'm also the vice chair of Civil Rights. And one of the issues I focus on, on Civil Rights besides advocating for immigrants, but I spent a lot of my time on supporting persons with disabilities as well.

I'm a disabled veteran. That's not the reason I strongly advocate for persons with disabilities,

but I try to make sure that government works for persons with disabilities, for everybody,

but especially for people that don't have access to government leaders. But, public health, just as an example, I know it's important to me, it's important to you. And I highlight the immigrant community, but I also highlight challenges families have in getting to appointments.

And when they're at medical appointments, again, the first thing I mentioned to you today was language access. Do we have enough people in hospitals that can speak various languages?

Do we have enough people in our schools, social workers, mental health counselors, that can communicate in many languages? So, not only can you communicate with the student, but you can communicate with the student's family, and make sure that the student’s parents, mother or father, or guardian, know exactly, some of the issues and challenges this student has, but also developing a path that that student can go on, that might be helpful to them. So, I think language access connects all agencies. In our city, I think language access connects us as a society, and if we're dismissive of people because they can't communicate with us in our language, or they might have a difficulty, even if they speak English,
they might have a difficult time with English as well. So, they're also important. Everybody's
important. And that's what I try to focus on as a city councilor.

Thank you for that. The next question that we have is, can you briefly discuss some of
the points of the City of Boston's Reform Bill regarding policing and what can we expect
to happen, if any changes, and when?

Yeah. The city is currently going through the budget process right now. The budget was
just released and the mayor has proposed restructuring, rethinking, reorganizing the way
we do policing

in the city. And many of you are familiar with, I just want to give you an example.

I try to give examples so I can make things as clear for me and for you, but many of you
are familiar with the crisis we have it now, South Albany Street, South Hampton Street.

It's a mental health crisis. It's a substance use crisis, but do we want police responding
to mental health crisis in our city, regardless of the location? We want to make sure that
we're able to redirect those types of calls, as an example, maybe it's not the response
responsibility of the police to deal with mental health crisis, related to 911 calls.

Maybe that person might need the opportunity for medical care. Maybe that person might
need to be opportunity for mental health counseling or drug treatment program, and what
are the services available for that person? So, I used that as an example of how we think
differently

of the police in their response. And, that's what I want to focus on as we go forward is,

the police play an important role in our community, but so don't mental health professionals,
42:33 so don't social workers in after school programs, in public education. Getting people the needed
42:43 quality, public education in afterschool activities programs, mental health counseling. We're
42:52 going to need more of that as we go forward, especially during this difficult year, during
42:58 the pandemic, especially for our young students that haven't been in class for the last year,
43:04 and maybe they're from an immigrant family, maybe their parents might not speak English,
43:11 but how does that young student communicate that he needs, or she needs mental health
43:21 counseling. And how do we connect that person to that mental health counseling again, in
43:26 that neighborhood, with services are available, with people that are providing those services,
43:33 understand someone's culture, someone's history, someone's background, and can communicate
43:40 with them effectively and with empathy.
43:45 [Rahman] Thank you so much for that. As an immigrant myself, I really appreciate that you're looking
43:51 out for other immigrants who may not have linguistic skills to communicate what they
43:56 need. So, I really appreciate that. The next question is from Jason. Councilor, what is
44:02 your proudest legislative accomplishment?
44:05 [Councilor Flynn] I would say my proudest legislative accomplishment is, I would say besides language access, I
44:19 highlighted that, and besides support of the immigrants, another part of that aspect is, 
44:28 I would say working in government, I don't know if I'd call it legislative action, but 
44:35 working in government as a leader on food access, has been probably the biggest highlight
44:42 for me in terms of my accomplishments during this pandemic, making sure my constituents,
residents of the city really also have access to sites across the city where they can pick up groceries once a week, and groceries that are respectful to their culture. We've done that consistently over the last year and others. Probably nothing worse than someone going hungry, especially a child, or especially a senior citizen, or a person with disability. So, I would have to say that working with my colleagues, working with the mayor, it's not just me. It's working with residents, especially in my team, but getting people access to food during this difficult year. This is the highlight of my career so far, on the council, probably.

[Vanessa Wolf] Would I be able to just add to the Councilor's comments too?

[Vanessa Wolf] Yeah. So, the last year has been extremely difficult and early on in the pandemic, around late March, this is not really so much a legislative accomplishment, but also, I believe a strong accomplishment that the Councilor did is that, he asked our office to organize calls to check up on seniors. I think we all remember initially when the pandemic started, there was very little information of how the Coronavirus spread, and there was a lot of concern with our seniors because they were the most vulnerable. And so, the Councilor organized a district-wide senior call. And so, our office, we were each assigned the list of different neighborhoods, including language capacities.

And we called up folks in Chinatown, folks in South Boston, folks and South End, to make sure that they were okay, and to make sure that they were getting food deliveries, because a lot of these seniors were not really able to go out, and they were afraid to go out. So, we checked in on them and made sure that they were able to be connected to the Mayor's
Office of Food Access, as well as reaching out to volunteers who were less afraid to deliver or coordinate efforts to get those foods delivered to these seniors. So, I'd say, that was a great effort. And a lot of the seniors also were able to benefit and secured food, during that critical time.

[Chancellor Flynn] Thank you for that. And so, our last question, because we want to be mindful of time, but this one's a great way to end it, kind of a call to action. So, Adam asked, you mentioned compromise and advocacy as two main skills of being effective in politics. What are some other skills and experience you recommend to students to work on if they're interested in being an effective community leader or public official?

In terms of, I'm just trying to think of the question, like personal skills, I think the ability to listen to people is probably the most important aspect. And again, I don't get it right all the time. I try to, but I don't get it right all the time. Sometimes, I get impatient and don't listen to the question and don't listen to the comment, I jump right in. That's my impatience, and those are my challenges, but I try to work on that. But I think the ability to listen is the most important aspect of an elected official. And, not waiting to think about what your response is to the question. At times, I think about the response to the question before I even know what the question is, and that, again, that's my fault.

That's a fault I have to improve on. But, listening to the question, understanding who's asking the question, why they're asking the question, and then think about it for a second, and then give you a response. But, as an elected official, you have to listen to your residents.
49:58 because you can't know everything that's happening in someone's life. And when someone calls
50:06 an elected official, when someone calls me on the phone, people don't generally call
50:13 an elected official, but when someone does call an elected official on the phone, that's
50:18 the most important call. That person is probably making all year, and that person's not calling
50:27 you just to shoot the breeze, and check in and say, hi, that person has a serious problem
50:34 if they're calling you. So, I take that call seriously, and that person needs help.
50:41 That person might be hungry. That person might be a kid, might be suffering from drug use
50:49 and is looking for a detox bed, or that person might be having challenges with their school,
50:56 for their child on special education issues. So, that call is the most important call,
51:04 that person might be making all year. I don't mean to exaggerate it, but I think it's that
crITICAL, when you get those calls. And I do stress to my team, when you get that call,
51:18 that we try our best to help the person. And I'm thankful that Vanessa has been doing that,
51:28 and my team has been doing that, but it's hard. It's very, very hard, especially during
51:34 this year, and we get stressed out, you get stressed out, I get stressed out, frustration.
51:42 You're overworked, you think you're not appreciated, and you can get snappy at people at times.
51:56 So, we just have to all work on treating each other with respect. And that's something I
52:04 try to do. But, I can do better.
52:15 [Wolf] Can I also make another remark? I would like to say that, in my time working for the office,
52:20 I think the councilors sell themselves short. And, it's been a great experience. But, I
52:29 agree with the sentiment that, I think during this pandemic year, I think it's been very
difficult and a lot of constituents are very nervous and concerned, just like everyone
else. And so, it is important that, no matter how critical or serious an issue is, or, less
critical, we still make sure that we listen and address people's concerns as well as,
give back to them, and help them work their way through the City of Boston departments,
to get what they need. So, yeah.

[Finn] Thank you for that. And thank you for all the work that you've been doing for the
Boston community and the Suffolk community as well. We really appreciate just having city
councilors and just any government who's just for the people, and really willing to put in the effort.
So, we really appreciate that. So, thank you for all that you do. Thank you for coming
and speaking with us today. It was really great to get to know you more, and to learn
more about what you do. And you can comment if any of this information is not correct,
but if anyone would like to reach out to the Councilor, here is his information.

[Wolf] I'm happy to pass on our emails in the chat. So, I'm going to just put that in now.

[Councilor Flynn] Excellent. Thank you, Elizabeth, thank you to the Suffolk University
students, and glad you guys are at Suffolk. It's a great school. It's a great training program for people that
are interested in government and helping people, and looking forward to seeing you guys in
the neighborhood, and let's stay in touch. And we would be glad to do this at another
time as well. And, let's stay in touch. I enjoyed the conversation.

[Rahman] Thank you so much.

[Finn] Thank you. So, have a great day everyone. And thank you again for joining us.

[Wolf] Thank you so much.

[Councilor Flynn] Thank you so everybody.