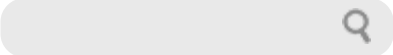




NEWS TIPS



An advertisement for sync.com. On the left, there is a line-art illustration of two people sitting on the ground, one with a laptop and one with a tablet. In the center, the text "Keep your files safe." is written in a clean, sans-serif font. On the right, the sync.com logo is displayed in white on a blue background, followed by a white button with the text "Signup free".

# Senate Candidate Ayyadurai Demands Apology From Mayor Walsh Over Handling of Free Speech Event

By [Evan Lips](#) | November 10, 2017, 20:04 EST

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(Evan Lips — New Boston

Post)





BOSTON — A challenger to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, the same individual who delivered the keynote address at August’s “Free Speech Rally” where police restricted access on Boston Common as protesters numbered in the thousands, is demanding an apology from Mayor Marty Walsh.

Shiva Ayyadurai, an Indian-American scientist whose campaign features the slogan “Only a real Indian can defeat a fake Indian” — a jab at the controversy surrounding Warren’s decision to check off a minority box marked for Native Americans when she successfully applied for a teaching position at Harvard Law School [decades ago](#) — is threatening to sue Walsh and the city over their handling of August’s event, should Walsh decline to issue a full apology.

The [August 19 event](#), held at the Common’s Parkman Bandstand, ended prematurely ahead of the arrival of thousands of marchers organized by Black Lives Matter. Police in anticipation of the rally ringed the bandstand with a series of barriers, preventing both the press and rally-goers from moving within less than a football field’s length from where speakers assembled.

Ayyadurai in his attorney’s letter is demanding not only an apology from Walsh, but also an acknowledgment for being “wrong in mischaracterizing the approximately 40 people in the Parkman Bandstand as a hate group and as sympathetic to white supremacy.”

Ayyadurai is also demanding Walsh meet with him “and others who were in the Parkman Bandstand, and any members of the press who wish to attend, to watch the video of the rally and acknowledge the sincerity of the group’s commitment to free speech; and, take steps to prevent such free speech violations in the future.”

Timothy Cornell, Ayyadurai’s Boston-based attorney, stated in the letter that his client is seeking “an amicable resolution to the apparently widespread violations of speakers’ rights at that rally.”

Cornell then ticked off a lengthy list of what he claims were unconstitutional actions taken by Walsh and other city officials, including Police Commissioner William Evans. Cornell mentioned a comment Evans [made to the media](#) in which he apparently praised his department’s work while noting that he’s “not going to listen to people who come in here who want to talk about hate,” adding it was a “good thing” that those who wanted to access the bandstand could not, as “their message isn’t what we want to hear.”

According to Ayyadurai, those who did have the chance to speak at the bandstand represented a diverse selection of political leanings. Ayyadurai himself at one point, according to video he has from the event, declared “black lives do matter” and ended his speech by making a call for “love, love, love,” Cornell pointed out.

Cornell also referred to comments Walsh made ahead of the event urging media and the public to [avoid the Common](#). Cornell also claimed that the barriers set up by police were ordered by Walsh and were not part of the original rally agreement organizers established with the city. He alleged that the city barred speakers from using sound amplification equipment and restricted access to the Common’s taxpayer-funded public wi-fi network, meaning the event could not be broadcast via mediums such as Facebook Live and YouTube.

“And in a clear violation of the Constitution’s Equal Protection Clause, the government imposed no such press restrictions on the counter-protestors,” Cornell wrote. “The public was entirely blocked from access to hear Dr. Ayyadurai as well as others’ speech, in clear violation of the First Amendment rights of the rally’s participants.”

Cornell also claimed that Walsh and city officials denied the rally organizers’ rights to peacefully assemble, and referred to a [joint October 24 letter](#) (attached below) addressed to Walsh from the American Civil Liberties Union and various First Amendment organizations condemning the city’s handling of the event.

Voice mail messages and emails left Friday afternoon with Walsh’s City Hall communications office were not immediately returned; Friday was designated a holiday in advance of Veterans’ Day. Ayyadurai provided New Boston



Post with a copy of the letter on Friday.

Walsh and other City Hall officials received the letter Friday morning.

The rally occurred exactly one week after a rally of a different sort led to violence, including the killing of one protester by a man who plowed his car into a crowd, in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Charlottesville rally drew a host of self-identified white supremacists who apparently assembled to prevent the removal of statues honoring Confederate Civil War figures.

Organizers of the Boston rally, however, had applied for a permit months in advance of Charlottesville’s. Boston’s rally organizers did in fact reach out to some speakers who appeared in Charlottesville, according to the group’s [Facebook activity](#), but later attempted to distance themselves from them.

One individual who had signed on to speak at the Boston rally but later reportedly joined protesters in condemning the event was Brandon Navom, who claims he was slated to introduce Ayyadurai. Navom pulled out of the rally but later filed a \$100 million lawsuit against Walsh months after he was fired from his job, apparently after his employer was bombarded with telephone calls and email messages ripping Navom over his initial connection to the event.

Cornell in his letter described Navom's demands as "astonishing," arguing that Navom had tried to "derail and malign the event."

Cornell said that Ayyadurai and others are willing to work with Walsh and city officials to prompt a dismissal of Navom's lawsuit if the demands laid out in his letter are met.

"It was as a celebration of this great tradition that Dr. Ayyadurai and his co-activists assembled as a diverse group of people at the Boston Common," Cornell wrote, referring to Boston's link to the American Revolution and other "defenders of liberty."

"Millions of Americans who viewed Dr. Ayyadurai's video have learned the truth in the days after the rally," he added. "My client hopes that you and your administration also embrace that truth, and meet these three requests so we as a community can move forward to build a stronger and more united Boston."

Another rally, [slated for Saturday, November 18](#), has failed to receive a city permit but organizers have said the rally will be held regardless. The ACLU in its October 24 letter to Walsh requested "assurances" that police would not erect barriers ahead of the November 18 event in a repeat of their actions in August.

Ayyadurai is one of five declared candidates challenging Warren in 2018. The other candidates are state Representative Geoff Diehl (R-Whitman), John Kingston, a businessman from Winchester, former Mitt Romney aide Beth Windstorm, and Allen Waters of Mashpee.

Read a copy of Cornell's letter:

[Ayyadurai Letter to Mayor Walsh](#) by [Evan](#) on Scribd

**CORNELL | DOLAN, P.C.**

One International Place, Suite 1400

Boston, MA 02110

(617) 535-7763

Timothy Cornell

Principal

tcornell@cornelldolan.com

The Honorable Martin J. Walsh

Mayor, City of Boston

1 City Hall Square, Suite 500

Boston, MA 02201-2013

November 10, 2017

**RE: Proposal for Amicable Settlement for Violations of Free Speech on Boston Common**

Dear Mayor Walsh,

I am retained by Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai - the keynote speaker at the Boston Free Speech Rally held at Boston Common on August 19, 2017 - to seek an amicable resolution to the apparently widespread violations of speakers' rights at that rally. The City of Boston's actions before, during, and after that rally demonstrate clear violations of the First Amendment's free speech and right to peaceable assembly guarantees. These infringements give rise to claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for the deprivation of Dr. Ayyadurai's constitutional rights, as well as the rights to a host of others who sought to express their views at that rally.

Read a copy of the ACLU's Oct. 24 joint letter:

[CityofBostonNovember18Rally-October24](#) by [Evan](#) on Scribd



October 24, 2017

**By Hand Delivery**

The Honorable Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor, City of Boston  
1 City Hall Square  
Boston, MA 02201

William B. Evans  
Police Commissioner, City of Boston  
One Schroeder Plaza  
Boston, MA 02120

Re: Rally Scheduled for November 18, 2017

Dear Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Evans:

We—the New England First Amendment Coalition (NEFAC), the Massachusetts Newspaper Publishers Association (MNPA), the New England Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ-NE), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the ACLU of Massachusetts (ACLUM), on its own behalf and on behalf of individual Boston-based journalists—write to express our concern that journalists were improperly excluded from the buffer zone around the Boston Common’s Parkman Bandstand during the rally on August 19, 2017, and to seek assurances that this exclusion will not be repeated at the rally that has reportedly been scheduled for November 18.

On August 19, the City of Boston banned journalists from coming close enough to the “Free Speech” rally to hear, adequately see, or talk to the rally participants. Less than one week after the heartbreaking events that unfolded at

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