

# **Liveable City Board Resolution Calling for the Austin City Council to Reject Amendments to the “Public Order Ordinance”**

12/12/05

The Board of Liveable City recognizes the right of all Austin residents to live, work, and play in a safe and healthy community. The Board understands the concerns the “Public Order Ordinance” are intended to address but believes the amendments as currently written will lead to unintended consequences which will harm hardworking Austin residents and our community.

The Board believes that enforcement of current laws is sufficient to address the majority of the stated public issues regarding public order until such time that a more comprehensive and caring policy can be crafted.

Problems with the proposed amendments to the ordinance include:

- Banning public solicitation of work city-wide without creating viable alternatives to address the loss of economic opportunity, potentially harming some of Austin’s neediest and hardest working residents;
- Creating an unenforceable or selectively enforceable ordinance, resulting in the loss of valuable time and tax dollars from the Austin Police Department and Municipal Court system;
- Unintended consequences of banning public fundraising by community organizations including firefighters, faith groups, student organizations, and other non-profit entities through roadside solicitation;
- Restricting the ability of non-profit organizations to conduct door-to-door organizing by means of an unreasonable and unnecessary curfew;
- Inviting legal challenge by restricting public voter registration and petition gathering;
- Highlighting the breaking of the public’s trust by allowing the 2003 Council created Day Labor Advisory Committee to lapse from neglect;
- Effectively criminalizing the state of being homeless without addressing the underlying causes.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Liveable City hereby:

Calls on the Austin City Council to reject the proposed amendments to the “Public Order Ordinance” until the issues of job loss, enforceability, public fundraising and political speech have been addressed; and furthermore,

Recommends that the City Council implement best practices to sensitively respond to the basic human needs of homeless people, based on model approaches developed in Minneapolis, Fort Lauderdale and Portland; and,

Recommends that the City Council reinstate and appoint a Day Labor Advisory Commission to address on a long-term and systematic basis the issues related to day labor in Austin.