

Don't Let Houston Make Sharing Food a Crime

The increased government regulation described in a new proposed law would lead to more hungry Houstonians and criminalization of those trying to help the needy. It would have a chilling effect on the common sense, local, and faith-based initiatives for the homeless. This amendment to the city's codes would make it **a crime** for unregistered volunteers to assist others, and for anyone to share home-cooked meals. Even storing a meal temporarily at home, and then sharing it in public would be illegal. The police would be given a new job of surveillance and enforcement against good samaritans. This terrible law even features a new, complicated set of hearings, with "cross-examination" of volunteers and punitive measures including \$2,000 a day fines and criminal charges. This goes far beyond bad civic policy... Requiring volunteer groups to obtain written permission to use public property is a violation of 1st Amendment rights of freedom of assembly and religion. Creating one set of rules for sharing with the homeless, and another for sharing at barbecues, tailgate parties, picnics, etc. is a violation of the "equal protection under the law" clause of the 14th Amendment.

Homelessness is rising fast in Houston, and existing shelters and kitchens cannot meet the need. The last thing we need is to penalize charity, service, generosity, and mutual aid. Volunteers help feed the homeless without making financial demands on the city, and as such should be held up as examples. Instead, the city plans to criminalize them. So, make your voices heard!

Demand that the entire proposed amendment to chapter 20 of the code of ordinances be rejected!

Helena Brown (832) 393-3010, Jerry Davis (832) 393-3009, Ellen Cohen (832) 393-3004, Wanda Adams (832) 393-3001, Mike Sullivan (832) 393-3008, Al Hoang (832) 393-3002, Oliver Pennington (832) 393-3007, Ed Gonzalez (832) 393-3003, James G. Rodriguez (832) 393-3011, Mike Laster (832) 393-3015, Larry Green (832) 393-3016, Stephen C. Costello (832) 393-3014, Andrew C. Burks, Jr. (832) 393-3013, Melissa Noriega (832) 393-3005, C.O. "Brad" Bradford (832) 393-3012, Jack Christie (832) 393-3017

read the PDF of the new proposed ordinance here: tinyurl.com/CriminalizingPublicService

join the facebook group: tinyurl.com/keepsharingfree

Join Food Not Bombs for the **Last Legal Food Sharing**, Monday March 19, 8 - 9 pm, 521 Lamar (Downtown Library Courtyard)

call the **Houston City Secretary** to reserve time to speak on March 20 for the 2 - 5pm public session: **(832) 393 - 1100**

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