



Nathan Lee, President

Scott Hente and Jan Martin  
Colorado Springs City Council  
107 N Nevada Ave  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

RE: Proposed Colorado Springs Panhandling Ordinance

Dear Council President Scott Hente and President Pro Tem Jan Martin,

We are writing City Council in order to present a student opinion regarding the proposed panhandling ordinance. We, the Colorado College Student Government Association, are very concerned about several recent initiatives that affect our community. In the past two years, we have witnessed our city take extraordinary measures that made life increasingly difficult for our most vulnerable demographics, the indigent and the homeless. We have witnessed a ban on camping in public places, a drastic reduction in vital municipal services, the installation of security cameras downtown, the exodus of a public hospital that helped fill in the holes in our health care system, and now this – an attempt to restrain free speech by criminalizing solicitation. The CCSGA supports initiatives that aim to further strengthen and build our community, and it is evident that this piece of legislation will only further divide it along socio-economic and ideological lines. Regardless of the specific language of the proposal, we view this as a continuation of a political effort to marginalize community members who do not meet some arbitrary standards of social fluency.

What is most disconcerting to us is the rushed and clandestine nature of this process. What is the impetus for this project? Where is the proposal? Where is the forum for public intercourse and debate? Advocating for this ordinance without sufficiently addressing the concerns of the public and elected officials is not only undemocratic – it is unreasonable. Therefore we are advocating for something similar to the following course of action, as recommended by Aimee Cox:

- September 10<sup>th</sup> - The City Attorney discusses the questions Council raised at the informal meeting and presents the proposed ordinance.
- September 24<sup>th</sup> - Address any proposed changes to the ordinance.
- October 1<sup>st</sup> - The City posts the proposed ordinance for public review.
- October 9<sup>th</sup> - Public Hearing. No action, but Council can give direction about whether or not they want an ordinance to come back.

- October 15<sup>th</sup> - If direction is given to bring back an ordinance, post the final proposed ordinance for public review.
- October 23<sup>rd</sup> - First reading. Public comment.
- November 13<sup>th</sup> - If approved, second reading. Public comment.

We hope that you will consider this course of action, and reflect on the state of the city that you represent. We do not want to live in a place that continually shows that it has little regard for the dignity and value of its poverty-stricken members. Being poor is not a crime. We are opposed to this ordinance; yet remain excited to find common ground in the future.

Sincerely,

The Colorado College Student Government Association

Student Body President – Nathan Lee

Executive Vice President and Student Liaison to City Council - Pat Knecht

Constitutional Vice President – Elliot Mamet

Financial Vice President – Stanley Sigalov

Vice President of Student Concerns – Charis Whitnah