



January 8, 2021

The Honorable Joseph H. Hogsett
Mayor of Indianapolis
Office of the Mayor
200 E. Washington Street, Suite 2501
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Mayor Hogsett,

On behalf of our members representing the commercial real estate industry in Marion and surrounding counties, I write to thank you for your leadership during this health, economic and social crisis and urge your support for a compromise to Proposal 291.

As you know, Proposal 291 sought to require groups and/or organizations making charitable distribution of goods in a public right-of-way or on public property to be registered with the Office of Public Health and Safety. We were recently sent a video showing large amounts of trash around the downtown as the result of a group with good intentions handing out food and clothing to our homeless. As our city grapples with the severe toll of the pandemic and racial inequalities, businesses and employers are relying on the city to provide a safe, secure, and clean environment necessary to bring individuals back to workplaces and visitors back to local attractions in order to move our economy forward.

We understand this is a challenging situation for some faith-based organizations and other non-profit groups. We hope these organizations can find equally impactful ways to address the needs of the homeless while being socially and environmentally responsible. In particular, requiring organizations to remain onsite to assist with cleanup efforts will ensure their good intentions are realized and impact to the environment and city is minimized. Education is needed about the disruptions and unintended consequences these events cause regarding safety, waste, and the ability of homeless advocates to engage people about ending their homelessness. We are not asking for distribution to be stopped, just modified. We recognize public food-sharing programs often represent the only way some homeless individuals will have access to healthy, safe food on a given day.

We appreciate this puts a strain on the city to manage the permit process when the city's resources are already stretched so thin. However, the lack of coordination among organizations leads to redundancy and more stress on DPW to keep our streets and parks clean. Action is needed to ensure the efforts of our city leaders are not derailed by the threat of food and goods distributions turning into yet more trash for DPW to clean up, costing the city more money and resources.

In the end, we want to see food and good distributions be organized, not criminalized. We thank you for your consideration of this important issue. Our association looks forward to working with you to support our city's recovery and re-opening, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,



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CC: Council President Vop Osili
CC: Councillor Leroy Robinson
CC: Councillor Jared Evans