

NetChoice *Promoting Convenience, Choice, and Commerce on The Net*

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December 9, 2015

RE: **Opposition to Amendment to City Code Title 25 related to short-term rental use**

Dear Mayor Adler and the Austin City Council,

We ask that you not adopt the proposed amendments to City Code 25 as they would deny your constituents property rights, deny the city tax revenue, and set Austin on the wrong path.

Austin is the jewel of Texas. And under Austin's 2013 short-term rental ordinance, Austin became the nation's leader in compliance with local short-term rental ordinances – with an estimated 72 percent of short-term rental owners and managers operating in compliance. This meant safe and secure rental environments and additional tax revenue for the city.

Short-term rental services provide necessary income to hundreds of your constituents. Over 52 percent of hosts nationwide live in low-to-moderate income households. More than 48 percent of the income hosts earn through certain short-term rental services is used to cover household expenses.

Consider, for example, the resident who does not want to stay in Austin for SXSW or the rodeo. Short-term rental services allow these residents to escape by sharing their homes and using that revenue for a trip out of town.

But adoption of regulations like City Code 25 just makes it harder for your residents to enjoy the benefits of short-term rental services.

Often complaints about short-term rental services come in the form of anecdotal stories about public nuisances. But outlawing short-term rental services is not the answer. No additional laws or ordinances are necessary for dealing with neighborhood or nuisance issues. Like any nuisance issue, whether caused by the property owner, their friend staying over, or short-term rental travelers, existing Austin laws address the problem.

We ask that you not set Austin home owners on the wrong path. We ask that you not deny your constituents the right to share their homes and make extra money. We know that any short-term rental policies should be developed through an open and transparent dialogue among policymakers, industry stakeholders, property owners, and the public.

So we ask that you not adopt the the proposed amendments to City Code 25.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Szabo".

Carl Szabo
Policy Counsel, NetChoice

NetChoice is a trade association of e-Commerce and online businesses. www.netchoice.org