



HOUSE BILL 508 Testimony

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by Maria Irshad, CAPP, MPA

Deputy Director, Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department, ParkHouston

The Honorable J.M. Lozano, Chair, The Honorable Gary Gates, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Urban Affairs.

Good morning. My name is Maria Irshad and I am here to present testimony on House Bill 508 relating to Relating to the civil prosecution of offenses involving certain municipal parking ordinances; authorizing a civil fine. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. The City of Houston's commitment to public safety, neighborhood quality of life, traffic mobility, and serving the public more efficiently is why we are here to voice our support for this bill.

In Houston, homeowner's associations / civic clubs may apply for the Prohibited Yard Parking Program. The Program is intended to protect neighborhood property values, prevent damage to the City of Houston's underground infrastructure, and stop the degradation of the aesthetic appearance of single-family residential areas.

Once a Prohibited Yard Parking Area is approved, vehicles that park in the yard, are subject to misdemeanor violations that are issued by the Police Department.

House Bill 508 decriminalizes the violation and allows parking compliance officers to issue civil violations.

Although Parking in the Yard is a parking violation, it occurs on private property and is considered criminal and subject to a warrant for failure to address. Therefore, parking compliance officers cannot issue citations.

Parking Compliance Officers maintain a regular presence in neighborhoods while enforcing parking violations on the public right of way.

Decriminalizing Parking in Yard violations will allow parking compliance officers to issue the citation and allow police officers to be available for more serious crimes.

The City of Houston has 200 zones that prohibit Parking in the Yard and these grow by about 2% every year as it is a petition process driven by neighborhoods facing these challenges.

We appreciate and thank you for your support in this matter. If you have any questions, I am happy to answer those.

Q&A

Q. What problem are we addressing by passing this bill?

A. This bill allows municipalities to decriminalize parked-in-yard violations and allows parking compliance officers to enforce this city ordinance. Peace officers have higher-priority issues to address and may not be available to resolve parked-in-yard violations. Parking Compliance officers are already patrolling the streets and enforcing parking regulations in neighborhoods.

Q. What problems are caused by parked-in-yard violations?

A. Neighborhoods are seeking to protect their property values and to stop the degradation of the aesthetic appearance of single-family residential areas. Enforcement also protects any City underground infrastructure. Allowing the issuance of civil violations, similar to other parking violations, will allow parking compliance officers to consistently enforce the ordinance and provide these protections to our constituents.

Q. Why should parking compliance officers issue this violation?

A. Allowing parking compliance officers the ability to enforce this ordinance will allow the police officers to be available to address more serious public safety concerns. Parking compliance officers are already enforcing parking violations in neighborhoods.