



Senate Bill 1495
Street Takeovers

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Committee members, my name is Francisco Gomez. I'm representing the Houston Police Department, which is located in Houston, Harris County, TX. Today I am here to announce my support of Senate Bill 1495.

I have been a Police Officer for 18 years and most recently transferred to our newly created Traffic Crimes Task Force division, aka street racers.

I would respectfully like to give a brief synopsis of street takeovers.

All street takeovers are organized through social media platforms in an open forum. Basically, street takeover organizers announce a specific location and time to meet.

Unfortunately, nowadays, street takeovers are occurring nightly in Houston and surrounding counties. Over the last few weeks, several street takeovers have occurred during afternoon and late evening hours, undoubtedly disrupting your constituents who are heading home or traveling in the general vicinity. Although, I can testify only for Houston, street takeovers are happening all around the great State of Texas and are evolving daily.

The purpose of a street takeover is to allow a PIT performer operating high performance vehicle in a circular manner similar to a donut around spectators on foot. Spectators range from 16-25 years of age. Spectators position their personal vehicles and block major intersections and freeways by parking sideways to disrupt traffic flow. Spectators then exit their vehicles and stand on foot in a circular formation within feet of PIT performer.

Upon the arrival of police, spectators are instructed to use their bodies as barricades to block police, so PIT performers can get away.

On any given day, YouTube or social media platforms have numerous videos uploaded painting an image of activities mentioned here today.

I believe SB 1495 will provide statewide police agencies with additional resources to effectively disrupt street takeovers by increasing criminal penalty. I can testify firsthand; street takeovers can cause serious bodily injury or death. Police agencies care about the preservation of life. Therefore, I ask that you vote favorably for SB 1495.

In closing, thank you Senator Huffman for SB 1495 and Committee members for allowing me to be here today.