

August 6, 2012

Dr. Michael Lauderdale, Chair  
City of Austin, Public Safety Commission  
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Dr. Kim Rossmo, Vice Chair  
City of Austin, Public Safety Commission  
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Dear Dr. Lauderdale and Dr. Rossmo,

My name is Kim Davis and I am a resident of the Chestnut neighborhood, which is bordered by Chicon Street, Miriam, E. 12<sup>th</sup> and MLK.

I am writing you today to share my concern about the “No Sit, No Lie” ordinance being considered for East Austin.

I live in close proximity to E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Chicon, so I am very aware of the open drug market that operates in the area. Personally, I have never felt afraid nor have I had any trouble when I drove by or walked through there with my dog. I actually had a positive experience several years ago when a young man, who I presumed was a drug dealer, helped me when an unleashed aggressive dog charged me and my dog. That experience changed how I viewed the drug dealers that stood on the corners. For the first time I saw them as human beings and not just as a menace to our community. I began to wonder what in their life led them to this point and what would it take for them to leave the life of dealing drugs. However, I am not naïve and fully grasp the negative effects an open drug market has on our community and glad that the ordinance has brought attention to this long-standing problem in the E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Street area.

I share the same concern as my neighboring communities who support the ordinance about the negative impact the E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Street open drug market has on our community, and agree that it needs to be shut down. However, I do not agree that “No Sit, No Lie” is the best approach to deal with the open drug market nor is it best for our community.

I believe that a targeted and systemic approach would be more effective than “No Sit, No Lie.” The ordinance casts a wide net and runs the risk of criminalizing the behavior of innocent people, which will further erode the communities’ trust of the Police department. I do not believe that the ordinance will shut down the open

drug market, which regardless of one's opinion about "No Sit, No Lie" is everyone's goal. Nor will the ordinance increase the conviction rate of violent and high-level drug dealers or give low-level, non-violent drug dealers an opportunity to stop dealing drugs and become productive members of the Austin community, which to me is a critical component of any strategy. Otherwise, the open drug market will continue to exist at E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Street or another area of Austin.

A targeted and systemic approach that has proven successful in shutting down open drug markets, convicting violent and high-level drug dealers while giving low-level, non-violent drug dealers an opportunity to leave the drug dealing lifestyle is an initiative named Drug Market Intervention (DMI) also known as DMI High Point. I believe that DMI Highpoint should be given an opportunity to work at E. 12<sup>th</sup> and Chicon Street before a more incursive strategy such as "No Sit, No Lie" is expanded to East Austin. "No Sit, No Lie" will further clog our municipal court dockets, criminalize the behaviors of innocent East Austin residents, and erode the trust between the community and the Police without having any real impact on the open drug market.

However, it's important to note that DMI Highpoint will only be successful if there is commitment from the leadership at the Police department and the District Attorney's office, and involvement from local social service agencies and neighboring communities. If there is support and commitment then DMI has a fighting chance to close down the open drug market and give low-level, non-violent drug dealers an alternative to their current lifestyle, but if DMI does not work then and only then should an ordinance such as "No Sit, No Lie" be considered for East Austin.

I appreciate the time and attention the Public Safety Commission is giving this issue and welcome the opportunity to share with you my concerns about the ordinance and my support for DMI Highpoint as a viable option for East Austin. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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