

Heintz, Polly (CI-StPaul)

To: jeb@rachstanton.org
Subject: RE: Vote No on Ordinance 21-6

From: jeb@rachstanton.org <jeb@rachstanton.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 28, 2021 10:58 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Vote No on Ordinance 21-6

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Councilmember Prince,

I'm emailing, as a constituent from the Battle Creek neighborhood, to urge Councilmember Prince to vote NO on Ordinance 21-6.

I support free speech and freedom of assembly in St. Paul, and I'm concerned that this ordinance would have a chilling effect on these First Amendment rights. This ordinance would give police far too much discretion to criminalize gatherings of Black and brown people and target Black and brown protesters. I also don't believe it would contribute to improving public safety and would actually make community members exercising their rights less safe, not more safe. It also has the potential to fray already strained relationships between city officials and Black and brown community members.

As I read the proposed ordinance, there are far too many loopholes for me to be comfortable with, especially since enforcement would be carried out by armed police officers who can use force if they deem that necessary (a subjective call.) For example, one part of the ordinance says that cardboard can be no more than 1/4" thick - this seems somewhat arbitrary and easily abused if particular officers wanted to do so. A person may use a refillable glass water bottle for environmental reasons - now they cannot bring that to a protest, and if they do an officer can arrest them. These, among other restrictions, are arbitrary and lead to lots of instances to criminalize safe, normal conduct.

Again, I urge Councilmember Prince vote no on Ordinance 21-6.

I also strongly urge Councilmember Prince to support steps toward real public safety and protection of civil rights in St. Paul by:

- Demanding that SPPD 1) investigate racism in the department and hold racist officers accountable and 2) implement stricter policies on use of force at protests and impose consequences on officers who attack protesters.
- Eliminating the permit requirement for public protests, which imposes unfair burdens on protesters and stifles free speech and freedom of assembly.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

Jeb Rach
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Saint Paul MN 55119