

March 14, 2020

Dear Neighbors and Friends;

We recently learned that the hearing by the House Urban Affairs Committee called by Representative Chen-Button for Marcy 24 on STR matters has been cancelled due to concerns about the coronavirus. This is good news as it is clear that this hearing was called as part of the continuing effort by Airbnb and VRBO to nullify the authority of cities to use zoning laws to protect residents from STR problems.

As if the purpose of this hearing wasn't obvious from the start, the office of Chen-Button removed any doubt when they immediately rejected a request on March 5 from two of the members of our state-wide coalition, behalf of Mom's Against STRs and the Texas Neighborhood Coalition, to be able to testify to explain the views of moms and neighborhoods. Worse yet, the email dismissing our request to testify went so far as to contain a not-so-veiled threat. Here is the sentence from Chen-Button's office that was apparently meant to intimidate us from even submitting written comments:

“While written testimony is welcome, any media (photographs, videos etc.) obtained in a manner that violates the law will be handed over to the proper authorities.”

This is an outrageous attempt by Ms. Chen-Button's office to silence voices she simply does not want her Committee to hear. We cannot imagine that this sort of threat is part of her office's standard response to all who seek to express their views, and there was no basis for singling out ordinary, law-abiding neighborhood spokespersons for this threat. So, while hearing on March 24 has been cancelled, it is very clear that Representative Chen-Button meant to muzzle the voices of the citizens and will likely try to do so again if the hearing is rescheduled. We know this coalition won't be intimidated and isn't going away.

Thank you for all your efforts, and I wish you and your families well during these next few weeks.

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March 6, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

You will recall that in the spring of 2019 our coalition joined with other citizens and cities from across the State to defeat an effort by Airbnb and Expedia/HomeAway to strip all cities in Texas of the power to address at the local government level the problems created by STRs. Our successful effort to stop Airbnb and Expedia/HomeAway from hijacking our State legislature was only possible because so many of you called or wrote the State Legislature. As we expected might happen, Airbnb and Expedia/HomeAway have not abandoned their effort to nullify the authority of cities to use zoning laws to protect residents from STR problems.

The same State representative who sponsored the misguided 2019 bill, Representative Chen-Button, has called a public hearing on March 24, 2020 of the Texas Housing and Urban Affairs Committee in Garland, Texas. A purpose of this hearing is to “Examine and make recommendations regarding municipal ordinances relating to the short-term rental industry....” It is imperative that we show up in force to let Ms. Chen-Button and the entire Committee know they should listen to the citizens of Texas -- who overwhelmingly don't want Austin to interfere with the power of their cities to address STRs at the local level. In short, this is not an area where a one-size-fits-all approach makes any sense.

Please consider:

a. Joining us on March 24 at the Richland College Garland Campus located at 675 W. Walnut St., Garland, TX 75040. The hearing will commence at 9:00 a.m. We need a large presence at this hearing to show state lawmakers that state interference in local ordinances on STRs is not an option. We hope through our work now that we can pre-empt another fight at the 2021 legislature. Wear green.

b. If you are not able to join us, please consider the following two actions that will only take a few minutes of your time:

First, If you have 2 minutes, please click [here](https://propertyrightsandsafety.salsalabs.org/March24Hearing/index.html) (<https://propertyrightsandsafety.salsalabs.org/March24Hearing/index.html>) to quickly send an email to all members of the House Urban Affairs committee. It is simple and easy.

If you have an additional 10 minutes, please consider calling each of the members offices. Their phone numbers and talking points are [here](https://propertyrightsandsafety.com/take-action/march-24-str-hearing) (<https://propertyrightsandsafety.com/take-action/march-24-str-hearing>).

Second, Say YES to add your name to the letter below that we will be delivering on Mar 24 to the members of the Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, asking them not to proceed with proposed one-size-fits-all pork-barrel bills on STRs. I just need your name and address and I will add you to the letter.

One final note: for your reference I have attached a series of one-pagers that we will be using at the Hearing. Please also consider passing on this email to your friends and neighbors. Thank you for all your support to protect our residential neighborhoods.

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