



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
Michelle Wu

February 28, 2022

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith for your approval an Order, An Ordinance Regarding Targeted Residential Picketing, to protect the quality of residential life in our city. The City of Boston (the “City”) has a legacy of supporting activism and free speech. The City also strives to ensure quality of life in every neighborhood. The practice of targeted residential picketing—which means picketing, protesting, or demonstrating, with or without signs, that is specifically directed towards a particular residence or one or more occupants of the residence and which takes place before or about the targeted residence—harasses residents and neighbors in their private homes and communities. Targeted residential picketing that occurs late at night or early in the morning increases the intrusion on the privacy and sanctity of the home, and is particularly harassing and detrimental to the sleep and well-being of families, including seniors and families with children.

The City is committed to the First Amendment right to protest, while upholding our responsibility to safeguard residents’ privacy and the quality of residential life. This proposed regulation regarding targeted residential picketing does not prohibit picketing in residential areas or marches that pass through residential areas. Rather, it applies parameters to protect residents’ well-being through reasonable restrictions on picketing directed at a specific residence only at night and in the early morning. Many other opportunities also exist for individuals to exercise their important free speech rights in the City, such as picketing, protesting, attending marches or rallies, or demonstrating in front of City Hall and other government buildings, on sidewalks, and in public parks and plazas, among others.

This Order will augment existing prohibitions against excessive noise, disturbing the peace, and blocking of streets and sidewalks by providing clear guidelines around targeted residential picketing.

I recommend the adoption of this Order by your Honorable Body.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston