

DENVER BALLOT MEASURE 303 (HOMELINESS, COMPASSION AND SAFETY) AND 2F (SAFE AND SOUND)

Overview

Measures 303 and 2F are separate Denver ballot measures dealing with different areas of the Municipal Code. However, the primary political driver for both measures is the City's response (or lack thereof) to people permanently camping in public spaces (or trespassing upon private spaces). In some ways visible street camping impacts all industries and residents similarly. However, for Housing Providers, the "Homeless" issue is distinctively problematic. Multifamily housing is often developed near public spaces and the deterioration of those public spaces has a uniquely depressing impact on rents for those nearby properties. Additionally, multifamily housing developments typically include significant common areas for use by the residents, which is easily subject to trespass. People Experiencing Homelessness are also "experiencing" a lack of adequate food, clean water, medicine, clothing, entertainment, education, mental healthcare, transportation, and personal safety. They lack the means to obtain any of life's necessities (including shelter). However, the label of "Homeless" suggests that the only hardship experienced by these people is a lack of housing, which implies that Housing Providers are doing something wrong and new laws are necessary to correct those deficiencies.

MEASURE 303 (HOMELINESS, COMPASSION AND SAFETY)

- This Measure does two different things:
 - It authorizes the City to develop up to 4 sanctioned camping locations to include running water, restroom facilities, and lighting.
 - It authorizes Denver residents to sue the City if it fails to respond to complaints about unauthorized camping and trespass on private property within 72 hours.
- AAMD has taken an official position supporting Measure 303. The Joint Legislative Advisory Council (JLAC) felt:
 - The sanctioned camping locations may have a positive effect reduce the amount of unsanctioned camping in public spaces.
 - Members are extremely frustrated with the lack of any response by the city to complaints about unauthorized camping and the associated street crime that accompanies it.
 - While the City believes the requirements for enforcement are too strict, the City has no plan for any level of unauthorized camping enforcement absent this ballot measure.

MEASURE 2F (SAFE AND SOUND)

- This Measure simply voids the last set of changes to Denver's Zoning Codes adopted in February 2021. The zoning change did two things:
 - It greatly expanded the definition of a "single family" from up to 2 unrelated people in a standalone unit and 4 unrelated people in a multifamily unit (plus an unlimited number of other people related by blood or marriage) to 5 unrelated people (plus an unlimited number of other people related by blood or marriage) in both standalone and multifamily units.
 - Removed any meaningful limitation to the size and location of group homes, halfway houses, and shelters.
- AAMD has not taken an official position to support this measure. The JLAC felt:
 - The issue was not uniquely relevant to housing providers. Whatever deterioration of residential neighborhoods may be caused by the allowance of limitless shelters, group homes and halfway houses in residential areas is no more harmful to our member's properties than to residents of Denver as a whole.
 - There may be (albeit very few) Housing Providers that benefit by the expanded definition of a "single-family" for standalone residences (mainly houses near universities being rented as student housing).
 - JLAC does not want to be openly opposed to efforts at inside supportive housing (given its strong opposition to limitless camping in open spaces).