

Declaration of Laurel Elizabeth Clements Mosley

I, Laurel Elizabeth Clements Mosley do hereby declare:

1. I have been a resident of Colorado Springs my entire life. I clean houses for a living and act as the artistic director of a non-profit theater company located in downtown Colorado Springs.

2. I often give to the needy in downtown Colorado Springs, in what is now the no-solicitation zone. I want to hear requests for aid from the needy. The solicitation ban that just passed will make it illegal for poor people to request assistance from me and others. The ordinance will suppress the pleas for assistance that I am willing to hear and interested in hearing.

3. I believe I have a right to hear requests from the needy and to give to the needy. Poverty makes a person feel powerless, invisible; money, in our society, is potency, agency, humanity. Just a few dollars can give someone a sense of being in control of some small aspect of their life: it's a decision to make, an outcome to direct. Even when I don't have much money myself, I often give the last of what I have.

4. I understand that some of the people who ask me for help might buy alcohol or drugs with the money I give them. I also know that's not always the case. Many of them buy food, for themselves or for the dogs they often have with them – the dogs that the shelters won't allow. I don't believe it's my place to question their judgment or make them feel inferior; my job is to invite them back into the community, to give them a little bit of control

over the next few moments of their lives – control that they might use to change the direction of their lives.

5. I believe, too, that it does a community good to think occasionally, as Albert Schweitzer exhorted us, of the suffering of which we spare ourselves the sight. To force the needy to remove themselves from our view – as the solicitation ban attempts to do – diminishes us all and erodes our collective and cultural character.

6. As a woman of relatively small stature and no aptitude in the realm of physical self-defense, I have at no time felt unsafe or threatened in any way by someone asking me for help in downtown Colorado Springs. This is a well-lit, highly populated downtown area. Solicitation by panhandlers has never deterred me from patronizing any business that might be nearby. I do not confuse requests for assistance with threats to my personal safety.

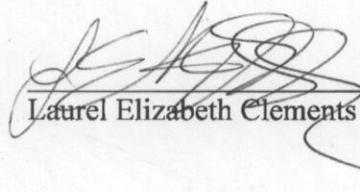
7. As a member of the arts community, I believe that street performers are part of a vibrant, colorful culture; they do much to add to the appeal of a city's downtown area. One has only to look to Kansas City, New Orleans, Asheville, NC, New York, Los Angeles or countless other cities and towns across the nation to see how much these performers enhance the experience of a city's visitors and residents. I often stop to watch street performers in downtown Colorado Springs throughout what is now the no-solicitation zone. Many, many times, I have placed money in the hat, guitar case or jar of a street performer to thank them for their musical offering. I believe that this ordinance will drive street performers from our downtown area and create a sterile, dry atmosphere which is not an accurate reflection of our community. I want to be able to continue enjoying the music of street performers.

8. I am the artistic director of a non-profit theatre company, Star Bar Players, which operates at 128 N. Nevada, in what is now the no-solicitation zone. Star Bar is the oldest theater company in Colorado Springs. Since it relocated to the downtown area about a year ago, Star Bar Players has solicited ticket sales on many occasions within what is now the no-solicitation zone. Whenever a show is running, Star Bar Players places a signboard on the public sidewalk outside of the theater indicating that a show is ongoing and that tickets can be purchased inside. Actors are often outside by the signboard talking to passersby about the show and encouraging those passersby to buy tickets. In the past, volunteers for Star Bar Players have passed out flyers on the public sidewalk just outside of Acacia Park (in what is now the no-solicitation zone) advertising a show and encouraging the purchase of tickets.

9. Star Bar Players has every intention of continuing with each of these advertising strategies. However, we have recently learned that the solicitation ban will prevent us from continuing with these advertising strategies. We are a struggling non-profit that cannot afford traditional print, radio and television forms of advertising. Our signboard is an essential way that we tell those who live, work and visit the downtown area that there is great and meaningful theater right here. I am concerned that the solicitation ban will cause Star Bar Players real financial hardship. Star Bar Players has a constitutional right to communicate with passersby about our shows and to encourage them to attend. The no-solicitation ban will force Star Bar Players to choose between violating the law and exercising its constitutional rights.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

11.21.2012
Date



Laurel Elizabeth Clements Mosley