

**Declaration of Steve Saint,
Executive Director of Pikes Peak Justice & Peace Commission**

I, Steve Saint, do hereby declare:

1. I am the Executive Director of the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission (PPJPC).
2. The PPJPC is a thirty-five year old community-based not-for-profit corporation grounded in principles of nonviolence, solidarity with the poor and oppressed, sustainable living, and social and economic justice. We engage our community as partners in creating systemic change on local, national and global issues by educating, organizing and nurturing a world of justice and peace. Our main mission is to stand in solidarity with poor people and to advocate on their behalf.
3. The PPJPC is strongly opposed to the solicitation ban that just passed Colorado Springs' City Council. The ban directly interferes with and prohibits outreach and solicitation activities that the PPJPC planned to carry out in the coming weeks and in future years. The solicitation ban will also increase the isolation of poor people in Colorado Springs, in direct contravention to the mission of the PPJPC.
4. I attempted to speak against the ban on the PPJPC's behalf at the City Council meeting on November 13, 2012, when the ordinance was first read, but after waiting over four and a half hours to speak, I had to leave the meeting to go to another engagement.
5. PPJPC runs on an extremely tight budget. I am the only full-time paid staff and work long hours for a very low salary. In this economic downturn, our donations have dropped dramatically, thereby threatening the economic viability of the PPJPC. As a result, this year, the PPJPC instituted a new method of bringing in

donations – by soliciting funds directly from the public while educating the public about PPJPC’s organizational mission.

6. In June of 2012, Peak Fundraising trained PPJPC staff on this method of public outreach combined with solicitation. As a result of this training, the PPJPC purchased four collection boxes and began assigning volunteers and others to go to certain places to pass out literature about the work of the PPJPC while holding collection boxes in which passersby may place donations if they wish. When the PPJPC engages in outreach and solicitation using this method, it does so in a largely passive, totally peaceable manner. PPJPC volunteers do not accost passersby. Often, PPJPC volunteers simply hand out literature that explains PPJPC’s mission and asks for a donation. At most, a volunteer may say something to the effect of, “Would you like to donate to a non-profit that is trying to help the poor?”

7. We have been pleasantly surprised by the success of this method of fundraising and, through the course of the year, have relied on this form of solicitation to help keep PPJPC financially solvent. Our organization has come to view this form of direct outreach and solicitation to the public as an essential fundraising tool that we plan to use for the foreseeable future.

8. The PPJPC has successfully used this method of fundraising on the private property of a few large stores, such as Wal-Mart. These stores granted permission for PPJPC to solicit on their property. The PPJPC also used this method of fundraising in Acacia Park this year at PrideFest. It was very successful and the PPJPC planned to engage in other fundraising activities of this nature at other events in Acacia Park in

future. Unfortunately, Acacia Park is now in the no-solicitation zone; so fundraising in the park is now illegal.

9. Prior to passage of the solicitation ban, PPJPC had also decided to fundraise over the holiday season on the public sidewalks of the central downtown corridor. Every year, the holiday season provides an important opportunity to collect funds from the public while spreading the word about the work of PPJPC. For virtually all non-profit organizations, the holiday season provides an opportunity to connect with the public about charitable work and, in the process, encourage charitable giving. It is the season of giving, and that giving often extends to non-profits.

10. Unfortunately, I have learned PPJPC will likely be unable to collect funds this holiday season on some of the privately owned property where we have been permitted to solicit at other times in the year. Apparently, these stores reserve solicitation during the holidays for the Salvation Army. As a result, in October, PPJPC began brainstorming about other locations to solicit donations this holiday season. We concluded that the best location to collect such funds would be the central downtown corridor (now in the no-solicitation zone) of Colorado Springs. Frankly, this location was an obvious choice. This area has the largest concentration of foot traffic on public streets in Colorado Springs. Passersby come from every walk of life, ensuring that our message reaches a wide variety of people. Also, a good deal of the foot traffic includes people who have the financial means to give to our organization. Finally, during the holiday season, many people are leisurely walking through the area buying holiday gifts rather than rushing around for business. I believe these conditions create an atmosphere that

encourages a more extensive conversation with the public about PPJPC's work, along with an opportunity to receive significant donations.

11. Accordingly, PPJPC decided that this holiday season, we would combine fundraising and outreach in the central downtown corridor by having volunteers or assistants set up an informational table about PPJPC, don holiday hats, ring bells, and stand by our collection boxes for donations.

12. After the holiday season and for the foreseeable future, PPJPC planned to continue to do outreach while soliciting funds in the central downtown corridor.

13. I do not believe there is another location on public property in Colorado Springs that would allow PPJPC to share its message with, and receive donations from, the volume and diversity of people that are found on the sidewalks of the central downtown corridor, which is now in the no-solicitation zone.

14. Now, because of the solicitation ban, following through on our fundraising plans in what is now the no-solicitation zone would be a criminal act. I am concerned that our inability to solicit donations in the central downtown corridor will seriously impede PPJPC's ability to fundraise this holiday season, and may result in some serious budget cuts for our organization.

15. It is the position of the PPJPC that the solicitation ban violates the organization's constitutional right to solicit funds while educating the public about PPJPC's work. I believe the PPJPC has a constitutional right to peaceably solicit donations in the most central portion of downtown Colorado Springs. Now that the ban has passed, the PPJPC is forced to choose between: (a) following through on our fundraising plans and violating the ordinance; or (b) complying with the ordinance and

foregoing the exercise of constitutional rights. The PPJPC, its members, and its volunteers should not have to break the law in order to exercise a constitutional right.

16. It is the PPJPC's position that providing information about PPJPC and peaceably soliciting funds from passersby does not have any negative effect on the beauty, safety and economic viability of Colorado Springs. To the contrary, the presence of the PPJPC in the downtown area enhances the vitality of Colorado Springs by contributing to the political engagement of the Colorado Springs community, by encouraging discussions about peace and social justice, and by providing Colorado Springs residents an opportunity not only to learn about issues of social justice affecting their community but also to assist in the fight for social justice by contributing funds to PPJPC. For these reasons, the PPJPC is against the solicitation ban.

17. The PPJPC also opposes the solicitation ban because of its effect on poor people and those who wish to hear the messages of poor people. The PPJPC works on many issues that affect poor people. In fact, some of our fundraising goals for the holiday season were to raise money to assist mentally ill homeless people. In the organization's view, and my own, when poor people ask for money, whether by sitting on the sidewalk and laying out a hat, or holding up a sign, or just saying "please give," this request for assistance can relay so much more than just the need for money. It can relay the heartache, loneliness, desperation, and/or mental illness that may go hand in hand with homelessness. It can communicate about the extreme financial disparities between different populations in Colorado Springs and throughout the world. The PPJPC believes this communication is essential to fostering the equitable, compassionate society that our organization works daily to establish.

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

11/21/12
Date



Steve Saint