



Street Vending Laws Amended To Protect Immigrants

By Macee Binns - Oct 6, 2017

LOS FELIZ — In February, the Los Angeles City Council voted to decriminalize street vending, which protects the city's immigrant population by ruling that unauthorized vendors will no longer face criminal charges that put them at risk of deportation. Citizens are still waiting for an ordinance to establish the rules for legalizing this code.

The Los Angeles Times reported that prior to the City Council's ruling, the unlawful selling of goods on city sidewalks could warrant misdemeanor charges that could result in immigrants in the country illegally being deported, under President Donald Trump's order that emphasizes deporting individuals convicted of crimes or charged with crimes not yet ruled on by the court.

Chief Assistant City Attorney Dave Michaelson stated in February 2017, "A first-offense citation will now only result in a \$250 fine." Despite the general concession among lawmakers that vending should be legalized, the City Council has struggled to come up with regulations, resulting in concerns about blocked sidewalks and the impact on brick-and-mortar stores.

Activists have indicated that the law's loopholes continue to put vendors at risk. Los Angeles Councilman Gil Cedillo hopes to remove any possible criminal penalties from those sections of the Municipal Code. Cedillo and Councilman José Huizar introduced a proposal this week asking city officials to decriminalize "peddling," which is not yet covered under the new vending law.

Michael Kaufman, a staff attorney with the ACLU, stressed that President Trump has instructed immigration officials to not only target convicted criminals for deportation, but also people who have committed “acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense.”

Kaufman said, “As long as these ordinances remain on the books, ICE can say you engaged in criminal conduct,” even under the council’s revised street vending code.