

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

ORDINANCE NO. 6917

AN ORDINANCE defining criminal conduct; adopting a new section 10.06.130 of the Bellevue City Code related to targeted residential protest; and setting an effective date.

WHEREAS, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the rights of protestors and demonstrators to peacefully communicate and express their ideas and opinions; and

WHEREAS, these constitutional rights are fundamental to our democracy and values of the people of Bellevue; and

WHEREAS, there have been recent occurrences of protests and demonstrations in the city that target specific residences; and

WHEREAS, these protests and demonstrations have involved posting of persons, focused course, or route in front of, around, or directly adjacent to the residence, targeting the specific residence and captive audience therein; and

WHEREAS, protest and demonstration activity that is targeted at the occupants of a particular residence, who do not welcome such activity, may harass and intimidate the occupants, is inherently and unreasonably offensive to and intrusive upon the right to privacy in the home, and may cause emotional distress to the occupants; and

WHEREAS, unwelcome and targeted protest creates a captive audience because the occupants of a residence cannot readily move to another residence in order to avoid the unwelcome protest, demonstration or picketing being directed at them in their home; and

WHEREAS, the preservation and protection of the right to privacy in the home and the enjoyment of tranquility, well-being and sense of security in the home constitute public interest and are critically important to the public health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court has upheld the government's protection of privacy and tranquility of the home as a government interest of the highest order and has held that the government may prohibit offensive speech as intrusive when the captive audience cannot avoid the objectionable speech, *Frisby v. Schultz*, 487 US 474 (1988); and

WHEREAS, existing law does not adequately safeguard the rights of residents to privacy and tranquility in their homes, and

WHEREAS, new reasonable regulations related to targeted residential protests and demonstrations are necessary; and

WHEREAS, these new regulations must be balanced with the rights under the First Amendment for protesters and demonstrators to peacefully communicate and express their opinions and ideas; and

WHEREAS, these new regulations is not intended to be applied in a manner that restricts First Amendment activities within a residential neighborhood which does not target particular residences or occupants therein; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to enact a reasonable limit on residential protest that reconciles and protects the right of protesters to express their views and the right of residents to enjoy privacy and tranquility in their homes; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. A new section 10.06.130 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby adopted to read as follows:

10.06.130 Targeted Residential Protest.

A. This section enacts a limited prohibition against targeted protest focused on a particular occupant of a residence or residence itself. The limited purpose of this prohibition is to reconcile constitutional rights of free expression and to peacefully protest with the targeted resident's rights to privacy and enjoyment of tranquility, well-being and sense of security in their home.

B. It is unlawful for any person to commit targeted residential protest.

C. *Definitions.* As used in this section:

1. "Targeted residential protest" means knowingly participating with three (3) or more persons in a protest that is targeted, directed or focused at a particular occupant of the residence or the residence itself, as shown by posting of persons, focused course, or route, in front of, around, or directly adjacent to the residence.

2. "Protest" means any protest, demonstration or picketing activity, including but not limited to, marching, congregating, standing, posting, parading, demonstrating, picketing, or patrolling of persons, with or without signs, and with or without making audible or amplified noise.

3. "Residence" means any permanent building being used by one or more occupants for non-transient residential uses, located in a residential land use district.

D. Any person who engages in targeted residential protest as prohibited by this section shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor and upon conviction, may be fined and imprisoned as provided by Title 10 BCC. This section does not and shall not be interpreted to restrict protest, demonstration or picketing in a residential area that is not targeted at a particular occupant or residential dwelling.

Section 2. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days after its passage and legal publication.

Passed by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2026 and signed in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2026.

(SEAL)

Mo Malakoutian, Mayor

Approved as to form:
Trisna Tanus, City Attorney

Trisna Tanus, City Attorney

Attest:

Charmaine Arredondo, City Clerk
Published _____