



Houston Tyranny: Businesses Must Install Surveillance Cams At Own Expense, Cops To View Footage Without Warrant

Description

Tough on crime or just lawless tyrants? The Houston city council has gone completely 1984 by forcing businesses to spend their own money to install high definition security cameras, from which the police can then extract footage without a warrant. This is flatly unconstitutional on several counts and will certainly be challenged in court. ? TN Editor

Houston mandates spying outside bars and other businesses. Officials in Houston, Texas, [have voted to require](#) an array of businesses—including bars, convenience stores, and strip clubs—to install surveillance cameras and make footage from them readily available to police. The dystopian move is a transparently unconstitutional attempt by city leaders to circumvent Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and seizures.

To access video from the cameras, police officers will *not* need a warrant.

The rules apply to all Houston bars, convenience stores, game rooms, nightclubs, or sexually-oriented businesses.

Owners of these establishments must install (on their own dime) surveillance cameras in outdoor areas “providing video coverage from the exterior of the building to the property line.” Businesses must keep these cameras running 24 hours a day, and store camera footage for at least 30 days.

If surveillance footage is requested by the Houston Police Department, businesses must turn it over within 72 hours. Failure to comply would mean fines of \$500 per day.

The Houston City Council approved this privacy-killing measure on Wednesday by a vote of 15–1.

“Their vote demonstrated a willingness to push aside constitutional protections and subject Houstonians to overbroad police searches,” [said](#) Savannah Kumar of the American Civil Liberties

Union of Texas. “But a city cannot override the Constitution. We are here to help you protect your rights. If the police come knocking on your door, tell them to get a warrant, whether it’s your home or your business.”

The measure is set to take effect in 90 days.

“In addition to trampling on the Fourth Amendment rights of business owners, Houston’s new law also infringes on property rights,” [said](#) Institute for Justice Attorney Jared McClain. “This ordinance unfairly saddles certain businesses with thousands of dollars in new expenses to install high-definition surveillance cameras and to archive their footage so it’s available for police on demand.”

“If you commit a crime, you can rest assured that we will be right on your trail,” [said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner](#) at a press conference about the new law.

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