

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1686

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK

Hearing Date: April 1, 2021 8:00 AM

Betty Armbrecht

Self

RICHMOND, TX

The Home Food Security Bill, HB1686 is personally important to me and to all Texas communities. I urge the Committee members to approve it.

I currently live in an area with an HOA that prohibits me from raising chickens, having bees and severely restricts any type of gardening. In these crazy times, the ability to provide for oneself and one's family is incredibly important. Children these days don't even know where healthy food comes from. Protecting the rights of Texas citizens to grow their own foods not only supports the individual and family but also supports communities, personal and community self esteem, sharing produce and providing healthy physical activities. Growing one's own food breaks down barriers and unites communities.

Please support The Home Food Security bill, HB 1686, to assure people's right to raise food for themselves through gardening or keeping small numbers of chicken, rabbits, and bees.

HB 1686 would protect Texans from overly restrictive regulations or bans by cities and HOAs. Also called the Personal Gardens Protection bill, HB 1686 is authored by Representative Cortez, and joint authored by Representatives Wilson and Toth.

Amber Jaeger

Self

Longview, TX

I just want to say that every Texan should have the right to produce their own food on their own property. I am blessed to live in a town that allows gardening and raising livestock including fowl and rabbits with reasonable requirements that keep noise and smells in check without encroaching on my ability to produce food for my family. The recent ice storm proved how vulnerable we are if there is a disruption in the supply chain. My family was able to share with friends and family a few fresh items that were difficult to find in stores for many weeks after the storm. I would love to see Texas law protect this right for future generations and secure it for those who currently are prohibited by a HOA or municipality.

Jeremiah Troutman

Self

Stephenville, TX

I live in a subdivision, outside city limits on little over 2 acres. The subdivision technically has some deed restrictions on animal husbandry. Not sure if this bill will cover deed restrictions as well, but if it does, it will ensure that I am able to do things I need to do to start a small farm. This is something I've been working on as a disabled veteran to find healing as well as with the times we're in to better provide for my family as well as my community.

Joe Thomas

Self/IT Technical Support

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Conroe, TX

We currently live in a one acre community in NE Conroe. Our initial plan was to have hens to produce eggs for our consumption as a healthy, cruelty free alternative to store bought eggs, however our neighborhood incorporated an Homeowners Association which restricts us from having any food production animals on our property. Homeowners Associations exhibit their overreach when they prevent single family dwellings from raising chickens or from taking part in any form of sustainable living through self production of food. The decision to regulate food production on single family residential lots shouldn't be left to Homeowners Associations; it should be the decision of Texans, and Texans shouldn't be denied the right to access or produce our own food.

Vanessa Neff Cavanaugh

Self Soldier

Belton, TX

I fully support this Bill, as evidenced by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and winter storm URI, we need to have the ability to raise our own food. This bill will continue to allow Texans to be independent and self sustaining. I strongly support this bill.

Lisa Farnsworth

self--Functional Nutritional Therapy Practitioner

Southlake, TX

I'm writing to encourage approval of this bill. I strongly believe we should be doing all we can to ENCOURAGE (rather than discourage) any efforts of individual households to produce their own food. The following are just a few of the MANY benefits of producing one's own food. Home-produced food is likely to be more nutrient dense, which can improve the health of all members of the household (this is of particular interest to me, as a Certified Functional Nutritional Therapy Practitioner). Home-produced foods help save money on the grocery bills. Growing their own food is a tremendous learning opportunity for children. Eating locally reduces the amount of food transported across long distances, therefore reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere and thus contributing less to the climate change crisis. A household that produces even just a portion of their own food is more secure (as well as likely some of their neighbors) in the face of food scarcity triggered by unforeseen events, such as the vulnerabilities exposed in our current national food system during the recent pandemic. Food production on residential lots should be encouraged due to the MANY benefits it can provide, in addition to the beauty and interest offered by a wide variety of agricultural plants, animals, and insects. I urge you to approve this bill due to its importance to so many individuals for so many reasons. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Thomas Kirn

Self

Spring, TX

Dear Representatives,

I encourage your support of HB 1686. This bill will increase homeowners ability to produce food crops or raise animals on their property throughout the state. As evidenced by food shortages during the COVID-19 crisis, Texans need to have the license to grow their own food. Extra food may be shared with others and home grown food will lessen demand at supermarkets and grocery stores. Many products sold at these stores are not grown in Texas, so it is more beneficial to have Texan grown or raised food.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kirn

Catherine Banks

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self

Murphy, TX

This bill is so important. I am a chicken keeper, a beekeeper and a gardener. I am not allowed to do much of anything at my own home because of rules of the Homeowners Association. As Texans, it is built into our DNA that we should be able to use our property as we choose to. Also, with the events of the last couple of years it has become more and more important to be able to produce food. With specific regard to Covid, producing ones own food not only is a solution for the broken down supply chain, but also producing ones own food is a healthy activity and greater health has been proven to mean lower chance of severe infection.

Please consider moving this bill along in the process. It really is so important.

GENELLE HITCHMAN

Hitchman Homestead

Kerrville, TX

I support HB1686.

The recent pandemic shortages have demonstrated how important it is for families to be able to grow and produce their own food. Because of my garden, canned produce and eggs from our backyard flock, my own family was able to weather the shortages this past year, as well as help fill needs for our neighbors. In addition, our own self sufficiency helped to reduce the demand on depleted & in demand groceries - allowing greater access for those without the means to produce their own. The ability to produce food for your family and efforts towards self sufficiency in food production should be considered a human right.

I urge you to pass HB1686 and favor the rights of families over restrictions from government & private agencies.

Rita Pesina

Self- home owner

Murphy, TX

If this pandemic has shown anything, it's how dependent we are on others to supply some of our basic needs. If a Texan owns land, they should be able to provide for the basic need of food, for themselves, their families & community in relation to the extent that the land they own will allow, without the fear of retaliation or repercussions of organizations or municipalities.

"The nine most terrifying words in the English language are 'I'm from the government, and I'm here to help'." - Ronald Wilson Reagan, 40th President of the United States

Paula Asinof

Self, Consultant

Dallas, TX

This is a critical bill that needs to be approved. The Home Food Security bill, HB 1686, would assure people's right to raise food for themselves through gardening or keeping small numbers of chicken, rabbits, and bees. While these activities should bother no one, some cities – and even more homeowners' associations (HOAs) – have a knee-jerk reaction to anything “agricultural,” and ban people from raising food for themselves and their families. HB 1686 would protect Texans from overly restrictive regulations or bans by cities and HOAs. The ability to raise food decreases food insecurity, can improve nutritional quality, reduces food cost - and even provide opportunities for achievement and positive emotional support in difficult times. Please support and pass this bill.

Anthony Simpson

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Bay Bees

Brownsville, TX

This is an important step in allowing people to live a healthy lifestyle and experiencing the growth of agriculture products. Our society needs to have a connection, understanding, and experience of the growth of our food.

Brad McEowen

Self

Murphy, TX

Good security is an increasingly important topic for many, and HOAs or municipalities should not be able to restrict the right of private land owners to grow their own food. Of course there are always nuanced safety issues that should be addressed, but land owners ought to have the ability to at least grow their own food.

Kathleen Eaves, Mrs.

self, management consultant

Friendswood, TX

As a suburban homeowner, I enjoy gardening on a small scale. Due to HOA restrictions I can only grow basil, oregano, and rosemary in the back yard, and no edible plants in the front yard. I would love to use the few hundred square feet of my backyard as a food source. I am not allowed to keep even a single chicken on my property, either.

Please remove the restrictions on food production on single-family residential lots. Let us help support our families with food we grow and raise ourselves.

Phil Suggs

self retired

Baytown, TX

Homeowners should be able to grow food and have animals on their own property. I SUPPORT THIS BILL.

James Eaves

Self. Retired dentist.

Friendswood, TX

It is my belief that every person needs to be allowed to provide the basic survival needs for himself. This bill, which would allow the production of food, is a step in the right direction. My HOA doesn't allow the keeping of bees or chickens. This needs to be rectified so that the basic need of food can be insured. I support this bill.

Suzanne Kerr

Yellow Cottage Farm

Livingston, TX

I urge you to not infringe on peoples rights to feed their families with crops grown on their own property.

Kristin Brookhart

Self - Trust Officer

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Cypress, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to support HB 1686, the Home Food Security Act. In the last few years we have seen natural disasters, rising unemployment, lockdowns, supply chain disruptions, empty grocery stores, and civil unrest. However, my HOA prohibits the keeping of poultry on my property, regardless of the number of poultry or type. This legislation would enable me to securely provide nutritious, quality food for my family at home, and avoid unnecessary dependence on distant industrial food suppliers. This can be done without negatively impacting property values or disrupting the community. If you support small government and personal responsibility, I urge you to support this bill. It is very important to me. Thank you for your consideration!

Scottself Howard

Self

Houston, TX

I I am a home gardener in Houston Tx and strongly recommend state legislation that promotes and supports growing edible crops on residential property to augment personal food needs or for donation to others. Fortunately the city of Houston does not have any code prohibiting home gardening but the typical HOA does have limiting or even prohibitive language for growing food crops.

Frankly, these rules interfere with the opportunities that Texans have to consume fresh and nutritious food. Unfortunately, the overwhelming poor health of of so many Texans is the most significant factor leading to serious complications and death once infected with COVID. Access to healthy food will make a huge difference.

Thank you.

Scott Howard

Kristie Wehe

Mockingbird Farm, Chief Pig Officer (Farmer)

Paige, TX

Food sovereignty should be a basic right for any human and it's absurd that people in cities and subdivisions can buy a gun in five minutes but can't grow or raise their own food. Nuisance disputes for small livestock are no different than barking dog disputes. There is no reasonable argument against people being able to grow a garden or raise a few chickens or rabbits for meat.

Margaretta Parma

self, housewife

San Antonio, TX

Every American should have the right to grow their own food either by gardening or raising small livestock such as chickens, rabbits, etc. It is anti human to control and regulate whether or not any person can grow their own sustenance. Every human being desiring to feed themselves should be allowed to grow or raise it themselves. It's a God given right. It is absurd in my opinion that others might have the power over individuals like myself to overstep and control me and what I eat. It is none of their business...

Michael Smith, City Manager

City of Jacksboro

Jacksboro, TX

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The majority of residents in the City of Jacksboro are opposed to livestock in town, and especially chickens and roosters. These residents should have the ability to govern their own community, as they better understand what they want their community to look like than do Legislators in Austin. Restricting the residents ability to govern at the local level significantly restricts their rights.

Stephanie Shelton

Self/employed

Buda, TX

Healthy food is one of the basic needs of humankind. What happens to our communities when we cannot even access the basics of food, water, shelter, social and psychological health let alone create it for ourselves when we are in need? What happened to taking pride in victory gardens, beekeeping, home grown cut flower arrangements for a recovering friend, fresh milk, and pasture- raised meat we could offer to neighbors or provide at a Sunday church retreat? As a society, we need to take a hard look at the health and security of our food system and the deep, long-term ramifications of ignoring a broken system. This is one step on the way to creating food security, health, and loving communities that have time to better themselves because they will not be worried about meeting their basic needs.

Jerica Cadman

Shady Grove Ranch

Jefferson, TX

Food security and knowledge are very important to me. Texans should be able to grow gardens and keep a few livestock even if they live inside city limits, without unreasonable restrictions. Food-producing creatures can be managed just as easily as nice landscaping or typical pets, with the advantages of giving back to their care-takers more than just companionship, beauty, and exercise. They can also increase awareness of how food is produced, increase access to healthy, fresh, and affordable food choices, and increase the robustness and diversity of food production within Texas. Food freedom at all levels is a win-win for Texans and Texas cities and HOAs.

Brian Cummings

FAR FA

Allen, TX

We should all be able to grow our own food including chicken. I don have a yard anymore but I sure look forward to the freshly laid eggs he provides me from his own chickens.

Melissa Mijares

Self / Home Maker

Grand Saline, TX

The ability to grow one's own food should not be managed or interfered with by an entity outside of the household. Food security is a problem that can be maintained by providing households the freedom to grow food, and keep small livestock.

Ryan Giesecke

self, beekeeper

Dallas, TX

As an urban beekeeper who also raises poultry and rabbits in an urban enviroment and will not be specifically impacted by this bill, I strongly support this bill as being reasonable and providing opportunity for others to achieve agricultural pursuits in

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residential areas. Having kept bees and other livestock in a residential backyard for a number of years, I strongly believe based on my own experience that this can be reasonably accomplished without issue in any urban area. To restrict citizens from pursuing homestead activity goes against much of what Texas was built upon. While I do not always support state-level prevention of municipal restrictions, I am proud of Texas agriculture, proud of Texas food producers, and proud of the households that support themselves in part through their own backyard agricultural efforts. I ask that our State prevent unreasonable restrictions in these areas.

John Krueger

Associa

Dallas, TX

I work for Associa which is the largest HOA management company in the country -- headquartered in Dallas. We manage hundreds of communities in Texas and have serious concerns regarding the negative impact HB 1686 would have on our client communities and their residents. Most lots in the thousands of community associations across Texas are relatively small and not conducive to raising chickens, rabbits, or bees. HB 1686 eliminates the authority of communities to self-regulate by setting their own rules on permitted land use for the protection of their residents. For these reasons we oppose this bill. At the very least, this bill needs to be amended to create a minimum lot size threshold to reduce the risk of neighbor-to-neighbor nuisance conflicts and potential allergy risks to residents for loss of containment, particularly bees. If enacted, this bill would create more problems than it solves. Please oppose or at least amend the bill to protect the vast majority of Texans who are not interested in living close to a mini-farm or apiary.

Monty Wynn

Texas Municipal League

Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Burns,

I am writing on behalf of the Texas Municipal League to express our opposition to House Bill 1686 by Cortez. The bill would, among other things, prohibit a city from adopting or enforcing an ordinance that prohibits on a single-family residential lot the raising or keeping of: (1) three or fewer beehives; (2) six or fewer domestic fowls; or (3) six or fewer rabbits.

H.B. 1686 takes what has traditionally been a local land use decision, and addresses it through a one-size-fits-all statewide policy. There are over 1,220 incorporated cities in the state of Texas. Some are among the biggest cities in the country with dense urban areas. Others are bedroom communities that have followed a more traditional residential development pattern. Many are small rural towns with large lots, some of which may have incorporated for the sole purpose of retaining their rural character. Even within the same city, there may be areas that are more appropriate for the placement of beehives or keeping chickens than others. City governments are uniquely positioned to seek and receive neighborhood input about residential food production and craft land use and zoning policies that reflect the will of their distinct communities. Indeed, many city governments across the state have revisited ordinances in recent years to loosen regulations on the keeping of animals like chickens and rabbits in certain neighborhoods.

We appreciate the author's inclusion of language that authorizes reasonable regulations, but would note that even with this authority there will be scenarios where city regulation is totally preempted by the bill. For instance, in a neighborhood of single-family garden homes on small lots, a city's reasonable regulation to keep beehives a certain distance from a neighboring residential structure may have the effect of prohibiting the keeping of bees altogether on a property, in which case the bill would prohibit the city from adopting any ordinance whatsoever.

The keeping of bees, chickens, and rabbits is a prime example of a topic that is best addressed at the local level by local officials who understand the character of different neighborhoods throughout a city. We support local decision-making as it relates to residential food production, which is why we oppose H.B. 1686.

Leslie Wetzel

Savvy Horsemanship Rescue

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MARBLE FALLS, TX

I would like to see the ability of Texans to avoid any overregulation pertaining to their raising their own food.

Gloria Whitehead, Mayor

self - Mayor

Woodcreek, TX

I am in opposition to HB 1686. Cities have ordinance processes in place to protect the health and safety of citizens. This bill interferes with the municipal ordinance process.

Kelley Masters

Myself, self employed

Cedar Park, TX

I support HB 1686. People should not be prohibited from growing or making food in their homes. Cottage food producers, in particular, have long been unfairly singled out by HOAs while they allow all other types of home businesses to operate, like home day care centers, CPAs, Pampered Chef, Mary Kay, and more. Please allow them the freedom to run their small home businesses without being unreasonably targeted and harassed.

Nicole Gaffney

Self home baker

Pflugerville, TX

I am a home based baker. Being able to run my business without fear that the HOA will fine me or try and shut me down will be a huge change to how I can run and succeed in my business. The ability to openly have people come to my home, have pop ups to sell last minute items for holidays and to be able to truly advertise to the people that live in my neighborhood will give my business a boost and be able to allow me to help out my family more.

Please pass this and help give legitimacy to these very real and very vital businesses in Texas.

Vesna Hollmann

Myself

Burleson, TX

As times are changing and people are finding new ways to get income, I think this law should be passed.

Theresa Richardson

Self, home Baker under cottage laws

Kingsville, TX

Under the current hoa laws in my neighborhood I have to ask permission every two years to operate my business, and they can choose to deny/revoke my request for any reason at any time. As it is I had to promise to have limited number of customers actually pick up at my household to 5 customers per month, I'm not allowed to advertise my business address anywhere other than on the food labels, I'm not allowed to hold a "pop up" style shop that would have a set up similar to a garage sale because that would involve advertising my business address, and if I break any of their rules I lose my business and face being fined or I have to leave my home. I'm not even allowed to have a yard sign advertising my business because it violates the rules. Please remove the HOA's power to regulate our home businesses!

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Jodi Perez

Self/ cottage food business

San Antonio, TX

Hello, I have to hide my small rabbit operation from my HOA because it's not allowed. They make no noise, almost no odor, and are a nuisance to no one. I'm not allowed to have chickens to produce eggs feed my family. Not being able to produce food (eggs) for my family caused a hardship during the pandemic when eggs were in short supply for weeks and then again during the 2021 freeze. I'm an educated responsible person with an agricultural background. I find restrictive municipal and HOA regulations regarding the residential raising of chickens, rabbits, and gardens an overreach of reasonable authority by these entities. I'd like to ask the Texas House to pass this Bill in our favor. Thank you.

Kristin Gust

Self - homeschooler

Pflugerville, TX

I do not think that an HOA should have any power to regulate, forbid, penalize, or otherwise impede the lawful business of a cottage food proprietor.

Please support cottage food businesses, and the freedom of all home owners to conduct lawful business inside their own homes.

Kay Thibodeaux

The Touring Chocolatier LLC

LANTANA, TX

I have a successful cottage food business out of my home; however, the HOA's "rules & regulations" strictly forbid residents from having a home-based business. I believe ALL of the residents who have any type of business in our community are in violation of these regulations (CPAs, financial advisors, Mary Kay reps, etc.). In this day & age, especially with COVID-19, many residents resorted to working from home, or developing a "side gig" which meant a work-from-home business. There are times of the year that I have numerous customers picking up orders (Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, etc.). I have been fortunate that my neighbors have never once issued a complaint, but I know the day is coming when the HOA stops turning a blind eye. The HOA refuses to work with residents who own businesses within the community & instead works with outsiders (and uses MY HOA fees to pay MY competitors). PLEASE keep the HOAs out of our home-based businesses, especially our cottage food businesses -- especially those of us that are abiding by the cottage food laws!

Katherine Cooper

Self

San Antonio, TX

Hello, thank you for proposing a bill to limit the HOA governance on regulating and producing food. My husband lost his job, due to Covid, and I need to make some money to help support our 5 children. Being able to produce food would be ideal. I have a food handling certificate, and would love to be able to sell food (under the Texas Cottage Food law) without fear of my HOA shutting me down. We would also love to grow a garden and fruit trees. Our HOA has strict rules. Each of our HOA's lots is more than 0.75 acres. I believe this can be done in a respectful way that isn't an eyesore. Thank you for supporting those of us who cannot move during this trying time, because housing costs are so high. I'd love to make the best of my time under this HOA, and I pray this Bill passes!

Sincerely,

Katherine Cooper

Crystal Carel

Self

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Murphy, TX

My family supports this bill as it is vital to help families grow food and provide for their family on their own property as well as provide basic eggs from a small number of chickens. This would affect my family as we live in an HOA and have not been able to do so due to fear of the HOA and our home. We are supporters of this bill and being raised on a farm and having grown up farming - it is crucial for not only families who live in urban/suburban areas to be able to grow their own food and have a small number of chickens to provide food for their families. Additionally due to the costs that continue to rise for food, especially with the aftermath of COVID, this will be an ongoing need and would relieve stress for families who are in residential areas and not be fearful of their city or HOA.

Katherine Walker

Self - Library Worker

Houston, TX

I do not have a cottage food business, but I would like to have 3 - 4 hens on my property to provide my family with health eggs. I have expressed this desire repeatedly to my HOA and have been tuned down flat every time without being allowed to make my case. I have a fairly nice garden, but would love to supplement it with eggs.. Please pass HB 1686 so that I can feel more secure in these troubled times.

Sarah Kirby

Self, cottage Bakery owner

McKinney, TX

I would very much appreciate a law that would insure my ability to run a cottage food business that is legal under state law, but may be frowned on by my HOA. I try my best to not draw attention or annoy my neighbors with traffic for my business, it is lighter than my neighbors usual football party but could still be called in and I don't want to get that HOA letter. I agree with this bill to clearly state my rights to operate a legal cottage food business from my home. Thank you.

Nikole Kazinski, Mrs

The Perfectly Imperfect Bakery

Pflugerville, TX

These should not be fined or closed. These people are making a living for their families!

Jennifer Landry, Owner/Baker

Self/Baker

Schertz, TX

I have been a cottage food producer for eight years, and have operated in two different neighborhoods with two separate HOA's, 'under the radar'. Not passing this bill would affect me negatively. I work in constant fear of being 'caught' every time I produce my product and have a customer pickup from my home. I do not feel like I can speak freely in my neighborhood regarding my occupation because I may be punished by someone on the board or a 'spy'. When I signed my closing papers for my home, I had no option to 'opt out' of my HOA. My customers arrive one at a time and stay no more than five minutes, no more than twice a week. My business is integral to my household's income. I cannot believe that the State of Texas recognizes me as a lawful business, however, a private company is able to restrict my operation. What is the difference of my business verses the other businesses operating in my neighborhood? There are Pure Romance, Pampered Chef, Mary Kay consultants, a trainer who trains people in their garage, a woman who watches children in her home (who has five separate parents that come twice a day, five days a week) and weekly game nights in my neighborhood. Those create more traffic and nuisances than my business. The neighborhood has solicitors that are 'dropped off'. They do not live here, if there was a concern for safety or traffic, it should be strictly prohibited. I pay taxes and support my community with my business, ironically pay dues to an HOA that wants to put me

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out of business. In conclusion, passing this bill would not increase my presence in my neighborhood. It would however, eliminate the looming threat or fear that I would be 'caught' or punished and affect my family financially.

Cristy Russell

Self

Plano, TX

I support ensuring HOAs not cannot limit cottage food business and I support residential beehives. I do NOT support allowing chickens and outdoor rabbits in residential neighborhoods.

Keeli Huntsman

Self

Fate, TX

I'm writing in strong support of HB 1686. As a homeowner I take a lot of pride in my home. I live in an HOA and do not feel it should have the right to restrict my ability to grow and produce healthy food for my family and others. If a resident has space to do so, it should be allowed. Myself and other neighbors have a strong desire to have egg chickens as well as beehives that would be well cared for and maintained in our backyards. Due to fear of the HOA fines we are restricted to do so, even though we have ample space for it. Passing bill 1686 would allow for individuals to be more self sufficient as well as improve our neighborhoods and livelihood. Thank you for your time.

Amy Denton

Self homesteader

Pflugerville, TX

I support this bill. After the last year with food shortages, we should not be limiting in our rights to produce our own food on our own property.

Samuel Trevino

Self

Bastrop, TX

I support cottage food industry and for homeowners to be able to grow a garden or raise chickens without interference by an HOA or other entities. As a real estate broker I can say raising chickens in my suburban backyard didn't impact property value or harm my neighbors. Unfortunately where I live now doesn't permit chickens as it has an HOA. HOAs should not be allowed to limit the cottage food industry or homeowners ability to have chickes or fresh eggs.

Amira Umphres

Self

Eules, TX

I'm a cottage food business owner in north Texas and the ability to run my business in my own home is essential to me not only supporting my family and making ends meet, but is also crucial to being a contributing member in my community and a working part of our local economy. Our small, family run cottage businesses are an invaluable part of our communities and we need to be able to function on our own terms. In times of uncertainty, it is also vital for us to be able to diversify our income sources as needed (by adding chickens, bees, home gardens, etc), both for ourselves, and as a place for our neighbors to have local resources to rely on.

Debranda Dorbecker

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Myself

lake jackson, TX

Please consider passing this bill. Last year, during this pandemic, I not only needed a hobby but also wanted to supplement fresh vegetables into our lives. I chose container gardening because I knew I could keep it looking neat and clean. My HOA made me remove all 10 plants that were lined up against my wall. To be honest it looked beautiful against a very ugly wall but was considered a violation. I would love to grow again and even share with my neighbors. It's healthy both physically and mentally and the kids around loved it! Thank you for listening!

Riley Nygren

Self

Austin, TX

I am an Austin resident in an HOA. The rules in my HOA limit the number of animals, outlaw any "farm animal", and prohibit any business from being run from the home.

It's ridiculous that there are cows a mile down the road but I'm prohibited from keeping a couple chickens for my own egg production. I know a few of my neighbors are flying under the radar their coops

The runs on food as each wave of pandemic and disaster hit over the last 15 months shows how unreliable our food infrastructure is and how important it is for people to be able to have the ability to produce their own food, at least in part. And my HOA shouldn't have the right to challenge my ability to grow a garden, can and sell the excess, or keep some laying hens.

David Shatto

Self - Student

TEMPLE, TX

A basic human right is to choose that which enters the human body. An extension of this right is to grow and produce that which enters the human body. Any restriction upon the above is a gross violation of human rights in favor of corporate or other food-producing entities.

Leonard Kelly

Self

Houston, TX

I am a Cottage Food business and support Home based business and that HOA should not be able to regulate commerce so long as it does not infringe on anyone else. I personally have not have issues with my residence but I know others who are afraid of being shutdown because they do not comply with no business rules of an HOA. During this economic depression, my Cottage Food business has been a welcome income to my household. I know of others which also could not have had their brick and mortar storefronts today had they not started in their homes. Please allow this to pass so that home business can operate without fear from HOA's.

Mahota Prater

self

Wolfe City, TX

People need and have a right to grow a vegetable garden whether they live in town or in the country. Raising rabbits and limited number of chickens should also be included in this right.

Candice Falatko

self. retired

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Johnson City, TX

We live on 28 acres within a gated community with a HOA. Cattle, horses, goats are allowed but not a few chickens. I am for this bill for others also that deal with restrictive food issues on their own property.

Aislynn Campbell, Ms.

Self. Professional Garden Coach

Corpus Christi, TX

Do we still live in Texas? Every family has every right to use their land to grow food to feed their family and supplement their household income. WHO DO YOU THINK FED FAMILIES WHEN THE POWER WENT DOWN IN FEBRUARY. Texas better get this right.

Denise Head, Mrs

Self

Waco, TX

Please help us keep raising our own food, rabbits, chickens and bees. With all the problems in Washington things are do uncertain. I enjoy providing good for my family. This can be donee without affecting neighbors. If kept clean there is no odor. Chickens are a lot quieter than cats screeching and dogs barking. Bees are in danger now and all we can do to help them is important. Thank you that Texans have more sense and decency than so many of those in Washington.

Respectfully,
Denise Head

Amy Bethel

Self

Sandia, TX

I support this bill, as all persons should have the right to choose not only where where their food comes from, but to grow food. Nothing is healthier than fresh, real food, and there is great satisfaction is growing your own food, and sharing abundance with others. No entity should be able to stop what has been a right and life choice for generations to provide for themselves

Amber Kirkpatrick

Self

Boerne, TX

I heartily support HB 1686. We are guaranteed the pursuit of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... and surely home-based food security is a foundational pillar for all three. It is a sad state of affairs that in our country (and especially in TEXAS!) we are unable to have the freedom to provide food for our own table due to the silly aesthetics of a random HOA board. Recently the structure of my own HOA reconfigured and it is not even comprised of people living in our neighborhood, but some organization based hundreds of miles away! Especially after the last year, with empty grocery shelves illustrating the logistical issues of getting food from suppliers to our local stores, everyone should be allowed to provide for themselves as much as possible.

Adriana Trevino

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

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I believe EVERY human on this earth has the God given right to self sustainability. No one should take away what mother nature gives us when we nature Her.

April Carey

self

Orange Grove, TX

Food security, particularly during pandemics, arctic blasts, and blocked shipping canals, is a critical part of providing for one's family and should not be limited by municipalities or HOAs. There is no reason that front yard gardens can't be tidy enough for HOAs. Perennial gardening in particular produces many beautiful plants that add to the landscape year round. Furthermore, this is still Texas. We still appreciate the freedom to take care of ourselves and municipalities and HOAs should have no right to infringe upon that. Small livestock such as chickens, rabbits, and bees provide a critical source of protein and nutrients while also providing fertilizer for home gardens. Many people cannot or do not wish to grow their own food. Don't limit the rights of those who would put the effort in to feed themselves and their neighbors the healthiest, freshest food possible.

Mary Fisher, Mrs.

Urban Garden Project

Katy, TX

Our HOA has prohibitive regulations that prevents us from growing anything deemed edible in our front yards. I am restricted from growing lavender and rosemary even though both have ornamental properties. As homes are built on smaller and smaller footprints, it is imperative that homeowners be allowed to utilize their own personal space to grow food. Many of us have turned to gardening as a way to supplement our family's food options. It is quickly becoming a way of life. Please allow homeowners to have personal gardens and limit HOA power.

Emily Dodd, Mrs

Grow local south Texas.

Corpus Christi, TX

Our recent supply chain issues illustrate why this is critical

Tara Yaws

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

We should have the right for this

Karen Walcott

Member of Terra Mar HOA

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Please stop HOAs from being allowed to regulate homeowner growth of foods and small livestock (specifically chickens) within the confines of their own yards. Growing your own food can be a cost saving way to provide nutritious food that tastes better and is guaranteed to be fresh and in stock. This has been especially important this year with pandemic and winter storm delays in grocery shipments that lead store shelves to remain empty for days on end. It is also a great way to involve new generations in sustainable agricultural efforts that can provide them with outdoor time and exercise. It's good for the environment too because it reduces fossil fuels used to transport foods and reduces the amounts of pesticides and preservatives necessary to prevent spoilage.

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Sidero Fenner

Self - Doula

Corpus Christi, TX

In this great state of Texas, where the land is one of the most precious things, how do we not allow Texans to utilize their land to its maximum potential? In much the same way as oil and gas wells are prized and protected by eminent domain, it is absolutely crucial that Texans reserve the right to grow their own food. We have had an astronomical rise in large property sales, and much of that to large corporations. What happens when the large scale farms sell or stop growing? We can't eat cotton. We need our small growers to be protected. Did the freeze not teach us anything? Who do you think supplied fresh food to Texans? It was local growers. HOA caters to the whims of squeaky wheel residents and it cannot be up for discussion whether or not a property owner has the right to feed their family with their own land. I implore you to consider the ramifications of taking this right away. Texas is on an independent power grid for a reason - we need the ability to fend for ourselves when and if necessary. I consider this to be exactly what Texas is about and what we would expect from our leaders at this point. Thank you for your time.

David Perrin

Self

Athens, TX

I currently live on two acres in a rural community and my POA prevents us from having chickens. Would be awesome if we could raise a few.

Joe Hilliard

Self, Business Owner

Corpus Christi, TX

This bill is pro-freedom, pro-property rights, pro-self sufficiency, and seems to strike to the very heart of being Texan. I am for this bill's passage and can not understand why anyone who has thoroughly researched and given real thought to this issue would be against it

Wendy Herman

Myself

Corpus Christi, TX

I have had a garden for many years. This year, I added chicken. All are within the city I live in acceptable standards. How dare anyone think they have the right to tell me how to use my property—especially on the topic of feeding my family. Don't be a "Karen". Mind your own business and I'll mind mine.

Tammy Montgomery

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Please help this bill pass by voting in favor of it. I am just an ordinary citizen, and do not do this normally, but it is very important that every citizen has the right to provide for their families as they see fit using their yard, patio, etc.... we can not depend on anyone but ourselves! Thank you.

Jim Mahan

Self - Healthcare Administration

COPPERAS COVE, TX

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This bill is an extremely important one to move forward and be signed into law. Currently, there are many restrictions which prohibit me from being able to have food security by raising a garden, chickens and rabbits in my backyard. We need the ability to increase our food security levels by growing our own produce and meat. If the winter storm has taught us anything; each Texan needs to be able to have backup stores of food and supplies. Please pass this bill.

Patience Creech, President

Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

Elgin, TX

The Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association expresses our support for HB1686. We support all families in growing their own food in their backyard or other residential property as well as raising a reasonable number of animals including chickens, rabbits or bees. We recognize reasonable restrictions by different municipal entities but strongly believe that home-gardening and/or cottage industries represent freedom and liberty of use of land by Texas residents. Thank you.

Carolina Mueller

Self, farmer

Austin, TX

As a farmer, food systems advocate and public policy student, I rarely see the opportunity to support legislation that truly secures the freedom of Texans to put food on their tables. This is that rare legislation! According to Feeding Texas, we have seen hunger double since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Food Banks, what options do hardworking Texans have feed themselves and their families? One simple answer is by growing and raising it themselves. This bill very clearly allows Property and Home Associations to set reasonable guidelines to protect the safety and lifestyle quality that will ensure neighborliness. Any objections to this bill can only be seen as secondary to what is giving the Texans the ability to feed themselves and their families. I truly hope that you will make the right decision and pass this bill. Thank you so much for your consideration.