# The City of Houston Wants to Spy on Everyone

June 20, 2022 - The city council in Houston, TX has approved a law called the "Exterior Security Camera Ordinance." It requires businesses to install exterior security cameras at their own expense, and then provide live video streams to the police. There are a lot of problems with this plan but the biggest one is probably that the plan is unconstitutional. Houston is apparently in the mood to get sued.

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s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
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})();
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As written, the law requires bars, clubs, sexually oriented business and convenience stores to install and maintain high-definition camera systems that are accessible to the police without a search warrant. But the city council has made it pretty clear that it would like to expand the ordinance to other businesses too.

While the Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that people do not have a right to privacy when they are in public, requiring businesses to provide surveillance data to police without a warrant clearly violates the 4th Amendment. If businesses want to voluntarily provide that information, that's another story entirely.

What Houston is attempting is an end-run around the Constitution. And they are doing so at the expense of the businesses that are impacted.

This past week, the Rutherford Institute issued a statement saying basically the same thing we're saying here. What the city is doing is unconstitutional. We hope that they get sued over this ordinance, sooner rather than later.
by Jim Malmberg
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