

SAN ANTONIO NEWS | TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

# 'Keep Kerrville conservative:' City debates controversial voting ordinance

One resident said she didn't want 'to see it turn into the next Austin.'

By **Mia Valdez**, Boerne Reporter

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A voting sign is seen at a polling site.  
Patricia Marroquin/Getty Images

At least one resident expressed disappointment about the decision to repeal a controversial electioneering ordinance that others praised for its potential to "keep Kerrville conservative."

Earlier this month, the Kerrville City Council unanimously voted to strike down the local piece of legislation, which it initially enacted after receiving a number of complaints about voter intimidation in recent election years. The ordinance was swiftly criticized for being unconstitutional, leading to a federal lawsuit.

"This is one of those ordinances that the body and the citizenry spent the better part of two years to sort of develop," said resident George Brody during public comment at the city's April 22 council meeting. "... and... then... when it was challenged in a court, we just kind of quickly pulled back a little bit of it."

Brody spoke on several items during the public comment portion of the meeting, saying that the ordinance was "gutted," seemingly due to the public backlash and before the lawsuit was to play out in court.

"I'm not looking for an answer... I'm just sort of saying what people are thinking out here. The way it looks is that we had an ordinance that was faulty at best, and we wasted a lot of everybody's time pushing it through, and now we're just pulling it back unceremoniously," he continued.

## **What is the Kerrville electioneering ordinance?**

In March of 2024, the Hill Country city enacted an ordinance to impose stricter limitations on election-related activities near its most popular polling location. The ordinance banned loitering and congregating and limited the placement of political signs outside of a small designated zone near voting sites.

It came about after the city received several complaints prior to a spring 2024 election from residents who said they were subjected to intimidation and harassment as they went to vote at the Kathleen C. Cailloux City Center for Performing Arts, the city's most prominent polling center. It also prohibited political signs and literature on certain parts of the auditorium's grounds and banned electioneering in polling place parking lots.

Months later, the city council voted unanimously to delete sections of that ordinance. One resident told the city leaders during the open comment section that she was hopeful the ordinance would not be reintroduced and that she "wanted the community to move on from the lawsuit."

"We'd love to keep Kerrville conservative and the God-loving community that it has been and not wanting to see it turn into the next Austin," the woman said during her remarks.

## **Why was the Kerrville ordinance controversial?**

The ordinance faced criticism for potentially infringing on First Amendment rights. Opponents argued it restricted free speech and political expression in public spaces. A federal lawsuit filed by Liberty in Action and local residents said the rules were unconstitutional, in particular, language the city reportedly included that said "simply two people talking to one another" outside of a 100-foot marker was a violation.

In September 2024, a federal judge issued a split decision, temporarily voiding parts of the ordinance, including bans on "congregating" outside of polling places. The court found these provisions potentially violated free speech rights, according to the San Antonio Express-News.

Facing legal challenges and advice from the city attorney, Kerrville's city council voted unanimously on April 8, 2025, to repeal the ordinance, aiming to address constitutional concerns and consider new regulations.

## What's next for Kerrville?

With the repeal, Kerrville will need to establish new guidelines for election-related activities near polling places. The city plans to develop regulations that balance voter access, public safety, and constitutional rights. However, at this time, there does not seem to be a clear answer regarding how officials will achieve this.

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**Mia Valdez**

BOERNE REPORTER

Mia Valdez graduated from the University of Houston in 2018. She previously worked at KIII-TV 3News in Corpus Christi as a digital content producer and social media manager, and worked locally in San Antonio as an assignment desk editor and segment producer for Spectrum News from 2019 to 2022.