

**Testimony of Craig Stroman
Founder and CEO of We Feed the Homeless Philly
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We Feed the Homeless Philly is a non-profit organization formed to feed the homeless population in Philadelphia. Since there is minimal help from the city to help feed our forgotten citizens, we take it upon ourselves to provide these people with a meal once a week, which we hand out over 300 meals every week. Our food is stored and prepared by our chef every week, and he is serve-safe certified through the city and has his Food Handler's license. We understand the concern of providing safe and healthy meals to the homeless population on the streets but there are some organizations that have been kicked off the streets from feeding people. Is this something that the city really wants? Are we really the "City of Brotherly Love" that we tell the world when we are kicking churches, organizations and other non-profits off the streets who are just trying to fulfill the promises in the Bible of feeding the homeless and clothing the naked? I want to go on the record and say that intimidation in any form is wrong and intimidating organizations without any clarity on what the city has on record for these organizations regarding feeding the homeless should not be tolerated. I was called today by two homeless person who were concerned and said that they witnessed Health officials "snooping around" and intimidating organizations on the streets. I think we forget that these people are watching what you are doing and access public library phones and utilize the internet just like anyone else. When I first started out, I was kicked out of the parks by the city and have some nasty and scathing letter sent to us from city officials that I have no problem making public. Statements like, "We don't want these people on the streets because they bring rodents and roaches." Does this Board agree with that assessment? I was floored when I received this letter and lends credence to my suspicion that there are some in city government that foster this thinking. I asked for help from the mayor's office and was turned away. I have the letter from his office as well and haven't heard any follow-up either. I think we all want to help but the intimidation has to stop. If business leaders in downtown Philadelphia don't want the homeless in their area, then they should chip in and be part of the solution. Help find us some space where we can feed these people. Or, get out of the way and stop trying to sick health and human services on us as a way to get us off the streets.