



**SUJA LOWENTHAL**  
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#27 OCCUPY LONG BEACH (Gabelich, Schipske, Neal)

I want to thank Councilmember Gabelich for placing an item discussing a “free speech zone” on tonight’s agenda. Although I cannot be there to discuss this issue due to previous commitments, I respectfully submit the following comments into record.

I am very supportive of the Occupy movement and its focus to call attention to an unfair global economy and necessary regulations for the financial sector of this country and worldwide. I am still inspired when I think of the movement’s inception with the Ad Busters call to action depicting an elegant ballerina balanced delicately on Wall Street’s raging bull. She is our David atop today’s Goliath. I am inspired by the groundswell of energy and support for a common voice this brought about. I followed the forums, blogs, livestreams and stories from day one, transfixed by the honesty and courage of conviction. Clearly, this was something more dynamic than I had ever witnessed or associated and came away believing that the ideas from this movement must be lifted above its daily struggles emanating from the ebb and flow of political and social contexts.

I have articulated as much to individual members of Occupy Long Beach, but it bears repeating that ideas are more powerful than any legal edict or local ordinance. A gathering of people expressing their opinions about the potential solutions to problems faced by 99% of our country do not need tents to validate their legal rights and demonstrate the power of their conviction. I fear this incredible nationwide conversation about our disparities is being sidetracked.

As a local elected official, I am beholden to 100% of the people to uphold the law and provide every person or group with the same protections. I cannot favor one group over another by ignoring the purpose and application of a particular law, even if I support their efforts. It sets a dangerous precedent that may serve our political interests in the short term, but undermines our ability to carry out our elected duties in the long term. However, I am very interested in discussing ways that the City Council can partner with Occupy Long Beach through its support for federal changes in our financial system. I believe we want the same things. Therefore, working together as allies will be far more effective to address the greater issues Occupy Long Beach stands for. I will bring forward a motion at the next full council calling on our federal government to reenact the Glass-Steagall Act. I hope you will be present in support.

I welcome this conversation and will continue to be a friend to the movement.

Warmly,

Suja