

QUOTE HIGHLIGHTS FROM SUPPORT LETTERS

"I speak on behalf of the Block Club Federation and the hundreds of residents we work with when I say that Humboldt Park benefits from Riot Fest being here. I have personally witnessed the way that Riot Fest has given back to the community. Not only do they support several anti-violence youth programs but they also support arts programming and summer programs in the neighborhood."

"Riot Fest has supported our mission by contributing to our efforts to keep 120 youth in our YIPEE Summer Camps (a free day camp for at-risk youth). Riot Fest has also facilitated us building communication, interpersonal and professionalism skills with our Youth Making a Difference (Y-MAD) Program as they learn the value of a hard day's work selling concessions to support the youth-led program."

—Maggie Martinez (Executive Director of Block Club Federation, CAPS Facilitator, Treasurer of Humboldt Park Advisory Council)

"The changes we've seen in the park in the last decade have been really heartening, and I think Riot Fest's presence there the last three years had been a big part of it. During the days of the festival, you see large groups walking around, discovering not only the actual wonders of the park but of the surrounding streets and businesses."

--John Stirratt (Wilco, 12-year HP resident)

"As a resident of the neighborhood for over 20 years, I am writing this letter in support of Riot Fest, the organization that hosts a 3-day music festival in Humboldt Park every September. I love the diversity of music that the fest presents every year and as a concert go-er I am happy that this is practically in my backyard. It is a great neighborhood event without any trouble and amazing music. It brings fun acts every time and is always a good time. I'd like to respectfully request you grant permits for this event and allow Riot Fest to return to Humboldt Park."

"This fest also participates with the community members and hires from within, providing jobs to friends I know and vendor opportunities for locals which is beneficial for growing the city."

—Melissa Gomez (20-year Humboldt Park Resident)

"As a Humboldt Park non-profit director and valued member of this community, I'd like to respectfully request that you grant permits for this event and allow Riot Fest to return to Humboldt Park. I speak on behalf of West Town Bikes NFP when I say that Humboldt Park benefits from Riot Fest being here. I know personally of how Riot Fest gives back to the community by fostering economic development, whether its through the creation of jobs by directly hiring from within the Humboldt Park locale, driving traffic to local businesses prior to the event, or providing local businesses the opportunity to raise money and awareness by vending on-site at the festival. Riot Fest has supported our mission by employing many of the youth we serve for the set up and clean up of this festival."

—Alex Wilson, Executive Director of West Town Bikes

"As a local property manager in the area I would like to tell you I fully support the continued efforts of having Riot Fest in our neighborhood. I believe it is beneficial to the growth of our community residential buildings and businesses. The large amount of people helps to give recognition to our community and adds a large-scale event that is diverse for our community. I'd like to respectfully request that you grant permits for this event and allow Riot Fest to return to Humboldt Park."

—Michelle Gomez, Humboldt Park Property Manager

"Our neighborhood is growing and changing and this event is needed to add culture, music and events in our beautiful park not just having a few, we should have multiple like this. Thank you for your time and I hope to see more parks and neighborhoods in our growing communities."

—Michelle Gomez, Humboldt Park Property Manager

COMMUNITY LEADER QUOTE HIGHLIGHTS

“The majority of the neighborhood supports Riot Fest. It’s an economic engine, cultural and artistic event that unifies the community.”

–Zach Abel, President of Armitage Neighbors Together (ANT)

“Clearly, there is a double standard with the Alderman: Some fests are OK, others are not. A local resident **[Mike Petryshyn]** thought it would be great to have a large festival in the park. We supported the effort and now it’s being threatened by lies and deceit. Alderman Maldonado and the extremists, a minority group consisting of no more than 40 people, are well-organized and will do whatever they can to stop Riot Fest.”

–Zach Abel, President of Armitage Neighbors Together (ANT)

“Open dialogue is critical, what I saw at Alderman Maldonado's office the other day was a shame; the threats, fear mongering, intolerance and stupidity only reflect a small number of people, however those are Maldonado's base. We need to live together and be tolerant and respectful of each other, however it is clear the alderman is a hypocrite and not tolerant of the neighborhood diversity.”

–Zach Abel, President of Armitage Neighbors Together (ANT)

“Riot Fest has been a great thing to happen recently in our neighborhood. New people come to the area and see what a great park we have, enjoy great music, check out local businesses and many eventually move here. And with the Bloomingdale Trail/606 opening in June, even more people will come to our neighborhood. It's nice to see improvements after so many years of hoping and waiting for change. Our city is alive, it changes over time and it's wonderful to see the positive enhancements.”

--Zach Abel, President of Armitage Neighbors Together (ANT)

"As a Humboldt Park business owner, I understand that job creation depends on economic activity and the hope and realistic possibility that it will continue. In a community where employment opportunities are precious, and thriving business are few in number, an event like Riot Fest has enormous positive economic impact. During Riot Fest, businesses, especially restaurants and bars, enjoy abundant sales beyond anything experienced through the rest of the year."

--Kurt Gippert, HPAC Member, 6-year Co-Chair of United Blocks of West Humboldt Park

"The Alderman's decision to represent only anti-Riot Fest group in the community is done with a total disregard to the many community members like myself who have spoken positively about Riot Fest and have come out to show our support. There was only one side represented in the equation presented [to the media]. The group is anti-dialogue, anti-discussion, destructive and disrespectful. Voices like mine have not been heard. For the most part, it has been actively ignored."

--Kurt Gippert, HPAC Member, 6-year Co-Chair of United Blocks of West Humboldt Park

"The anti-Riot Fest group [you've been hearing about] represents a small, vocal and organized portion of the community, but does not represent the majority of Humboldt Park residents. The pro-Riot Fest community was purposefully excluded from the [press conference on May 8th that garnered a lot of attention]. The majority of HP residents support Riot Fest."

--Kurt Gippert, HPAC Member, 6-year Co-Chair of United Blocks of West Humboldt Park

"As the 6 year previous Co-Chair of the United Blocks of West Humboldt Park, and a long-time and continuing member of Humboldt Park Advisory Council (HPAC), I can assure you that there was not a single notification attempt to include members of these groups [in the conversation and anti Riot Fest press conference]."

--Kurt Gippert, HPAC Member, 6-year Co-Chair of United Blocks of West Humboldt Park

"When Alderman Maldonado says he is responding to the complaints of the community, which I am sure he has received, he is omitting the fact that hundreds of residents have contacted him in support of Riot Fest."

--Kurt Gippert, HPAC Member, 6-year Co-Chair of United Blocks of West Humboldt Park

"At a Park District meeting Wednesday, an anti-Riot Fester blamed Riot Fest for race baiting and dividing citizens. If that isn't the pot calling the kettle black! The same fourteen showed up [to the meeting] and stated the same old garbage that Riot Fest must be kicked out!"

--Richard Karwowski, Executive Co-Director of The United Blocks of Humboldt Park

"I went [to the alderman's Ward Night] and Maldonado repeated he was anti-Riot Fest because that is what the majority of the community wants. I asked if it was proven that the majority of the community wants Riot Fest would he change his mind, his reply was he would still be against Riot Fest! He also stated that Riot Fest organizers had not approached him since September, but I saw organizers there last week so he must have forgotten that. This appears to be a dead end."

--Richard Karwowski, Executive Co-Director of The United Blocks of Humboldt Park

"RF has been at HPAC meetings months before every event, now four years in a row. Charlie [Billups] has been at the last two HPAC meetings, never seen before in the last decade! If he cares about the park so much, why hasn't he been attending HPAC in the last ten years? I don't believe he cares about the park at all and this is just his way to stop gentrification. Charlie, please answer the questions about all the jobs you are destroying and how this is good for HP?"

--Richard Karwowski, Executive Co-Director of TUBHP

"The United Blocks of Humboldt Park was formed from multiple block clubs and founded in 1995 as The United Blocks of West Humboldt Park. This is our 20th Anniversary year. Two or three years ago, a group formed to further the business development on Chicago Avenue, from Kedzie to Pulaski. They called themselves the West Humboldt Park Development Council. They have gotten the blessing of the Chicago Avenue community, businesses, and of Alderman Burnett. The two names were getting confused, so our neighborhood group changed its name about 6 months ago to The United Blocks of Humboldt Park. As far as the boundaries go, they have grown over the years as residents from other blocks wanted to belong to the group. There are several neighborhood groups around Humboldt Park. I supposed because the area is so large. It wasn't done by design, they just grew in a grassroots fashion by residents of different areas."

"I live across the street from the park and the fest; I live in the 26th ward; I voted in the Feb elections; I signed the petition; I went to the alderman's office Monday [for ward night]. Does that give me permission to speak here? Why would any city (especially a cash-strapped city) want to get rid of the best music festival in the country (per USA Today)? By the way, the owners of Riot Fest were there on Monday to speak to Maldonado, just an FYI to silence the speculators."

--Glenn Brettner, Executive Co-Director of TUBHP

[QUOTES HIGHLIGHTS FROM RESIDENTS ON CPD ONLINE FORUM \(SEE SOURCE HERE\)](#)

"As a 20 year resident & business owner in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, I strongly support Riot Fest continuing its 3 day music festival in the park. The national exposure and economic benefits to the neighborhood go way beyond 3 days of minor inconvenience in the fall. Much of the growth & development

that has happened in the last few years here has been bolstered by Riot Fest's support and belief in this community." --Jeff Atkins

"I'm a resident/property owner at Augusta & California in the 26th ward, and I wholeheartedly support Riot Fest's return to Humboldt Park. It is not for a small group of residents to pick and choose what festivals are acceptable to their liking, as this is simply not in the spirit of inclusiveness/fairness we strive for in Chicago. Further, it is reprehensible to attempt to deny our local business owners the much needed income they count on and [would] undoubtedly earn from Riot Fest's return." --Stephanie Wallin

"As an eight-year Humboldt Park homeowner whose family has lived and worked in the neighborhood for over sixty years, I am writing to express my support for Riot Fest. Not only does it introduce our historically disparaged neighborhood to the world in a positive light, it's a fun weekend that my family looks forward to participating in every year. The organizers have proven themselves to be good neighbors who are dedicated to being a positive force in the community." --Rachel Cole

"I am a 15 year resident, business owner and property owner in the 26th Ward and I support Riot Fest returning to Humboldt Park. The statements made regarding the state of the park after the event, the clean up and the park access are completely inaccurate. I personally accessed the park a day before the festival and a day after with my children, at the playground located just North of the lagoon. The statements made by a small group, including people who do not live in the 26th Ward, are unfounded. Thank you for the time you have taken to review the facts related to this issue." --Jennifer Shaffer

"As an 8 year resident of HP, I wholly support Riot Fest's continued involvement in the community, including being held in Humboldt Park. The opposition to this festival started with an objection to trampled grass (something other festivals do as well) and keeps moving as soon as facts refuting claims emerge. The inconveniences of noise and traffic (again, something other events cause) are greatly overshadowed by the philanthropy Riot Fest gives back to a neighborhood that desperately needs it. I urge you to see through the rhetoric of a vocal minority that claims to represent the community and support it's continuation in Humboldt Park." --Nancy Nowak

"I own a home in the 26th ward and have been a resident in the area for 11 years. I have seen the neighborhood change significantly, and in many ways for the better in that time. Riot Fest is one of those positive changes. It draws people from all over to Humboldt Park to see that it is a beautiful and vibrant area. Businesses in the area benefit from the increased traffic of people, and the "destruction" of the park is highly exaggerated. It would be a loss for the neighborhoods surrounding Humboldt Park if it were forced to move." --Mike Oconnor

QUOTE HIGHLIGHTS FROM CHANGE.ORG PETITION

"I truly believe Riot Fest is a wonderful cultural event for our community, and raises awareness of this safe, beautiful, world-class park that has been marred for years with a horrible reputation for violence and unrest. Moreover, it is a boon for local businesses. The temporary inconveniences of public transportation re-routes (and yes, I use public transportation) are outweighed by the benefits of this event. I sincerely hope you will not force its relocation." – Juliann Salinas || Chicago, IL 60618

"I respect and am glad for the interesting quality of programming and good spirit of Riot Fest. I have lived in the neighborhood for more than 30 years and have owned a home adjacent to Humboldt Park for more than 20 years. Riot Fest is a positive community enriching event." – Peter Taub || Chicago, IL 60622

"Riot Fest is a great festival that I have been going to for years. I am also Puerto Rican and grew up in the Humboldt park area. The festival brings income to the neighborhood while breaking the negative stereotypes associated with Humboldt park. The alderman should be more worried about diminishing crime and improving

schools in the community. Instead he is focusing on riot fest as a publicity stunt and ploy for further financial gain from the sponsors.” – Silvia Miranda || Chicago, IL 60647

“We have owned our home, which is now in the 26th ward, since 1995. When alderman's staffer called to solicit my vote not too long ago, he told me that the alderman supported Riot Fest in Humboldt Park. I felt that, for the first time, an alderman considered me part of the community, guess I was wrong. The beauty of my immediate neighborhood is that it is diverse, relaxed, accepting. We all seem to embrace, tolerate, and enjoy our varied tastes and activities, no matter how loud or different. What alderman's position means to me is that he is pooping on the spirit of my neighborhood, my forever home. Diversity and tolerance of differences for 3 out of 365 days is always a good thing.” – Yvette Smith || Chicago, IL 60622

“I'm signing because this has been a great event for the community, and is supported by a very large portion of the community surrounding Humboldt Park. The Alderman chooses to side with a single group with a minority opinion, and is claiming a larger amount of actual complaint than he can prove. He also has made bold-faced accusations of ongoing park damage with zero specificity.” – Paul Cellini || Chicago, IL 60622

“My wife and I moved to Humboldt Park 10 years ago. Humboldt Park is our home and we can't imagine living anywhere else in the city. We were thrilled when Riot Fest announced the move to Humboldt Park and we've attended the festival every year. Riot Fest is our opportunity to share our special neighborhood with the rest of the world. Riot Fest has deep roots in Humboldt Park and I know they love the neighborhood as much as we do. Please keep Riot Fest in Humboldt Park where it truly belongs.” – Erik Wallin || Chicago, IL 60622

“Because I love Riot Fest, I think its great for the neighborhood; it stimulates local economy and promotes community cohesion. I'm a 26th Ward resident and I want to keep Riot Fest in Humboldt Park.” – Yuris Bendiks || Chicago, IL 60653

“Having lived in the Humboldt Park area for over 20 years and been a property owner here for 10 years, I am excited that such a wonderful festival has chosen this neighborhood as their home. It is a fantastic way to share this amazing park & neighborhood with people that might not otherwise visit it.” –Tanja Deshida || Chicago, IL 60651

“I'm signing because I am a proud resident of Humboldt Park and support Riot Fest. Riot Fest cares for the city, neighborhood, local business, and most importantly, the park. The festival and its organizers are the best ambassador we have for the neighborhood.” --Jamie White || Chicago, IL 60622

“As a Humboldt Park resident for over 10 years, I think Riot Fest is the best thing that has happened to the community. It is a tremendous economic engine, brings a new perspective and attitude, and RF is welcome forever!” –Kurt Gippert || Chicago, IL 60647

“I'm a homeowner in Humboldt Park and strongly believe Riot Fest is an asset to our growing community. I am proud that Riot Fest has shown we can have an amazing music festival in our neighborhood -- an honor no longer reserved only for Grant Park.”
--Chantel Asner || Chicago, IL 60647

“Riot Fest is one of the few responsible festivals in the city. The coordinators are sure to take care of the park after the festival, they assist hungry neighborhood families, and the businesses in the area benefit during the 3-day event. This festival keeps Humboldt Park thriving.” Jorie Moore || Chicago, IL 60647

“As a resident of Humboldt Park, I strongly support the return of Riot Fest. Keeping the fest in HP not only benefits local businesses, but also brings people from all over to an area of the city they normally would not visit. I support Riot Fest in my backyard again!!!!” – Jacklyn Ceballos || Chicago, IL 60647

“As a proud Humboldt Park resident for some time now, I can speak for many of my neighbors that Alderman Maldonado's recent stance against Riot Fest does not represent our views. Aside from the contributions it's made to the community, both financial and participatory, Riot Fest has helped lift the stigma of the park as a dangerous place. Could improvements be made? Absolutely. Does it seem fair to pull support without even addressing these concerns while supporting other events that are held in the same space?” –Nancy Nowak || Chicago, IL 60622

“Riotfest has been a great neighbor, despite the damage to the park. A lot of organizations and individuals sell parking spots to the guests. Family members specifically come to visit over Riotfest to attend the shows, and it has become a tradition over the past several years. Yes it changes the neighborhood for the weekend and limits access to the park in the days before and after the fest, but overall it brings much more to the community than it takes away. I love it and hope it stays in my backyard.” – Sherry Daun || Chicago, IL 60651

“As a resident and homeowner in Humboldt Park, I support RF in Humboldt Park. This festival has brought money and jobs into the community. The alderman does not speak for me and frankly should be supporting this event. It's [disappointing] the alderman is actively trying to stifle growth and development of my neighborhood.” – Melissa Mason || Chicago, IL 60622

“I have been a resident of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and a Riot Fest attendee since the annual festival started being held here. I have had friends and family members visit the neighborhood for the festival and see our beautiful city not from the perspective of a tourist but one of a person residing in the diverse and beautiful neighborhood. Keeping the festival here in our park will keep this beautiful city's hardworking values true and bring about new and interesting opportunities for improvement through self evaluation.” – Mike Parrish || Chicago, IL 60622

“I have lived in this neighborhood all 43 yrs of my life and having events here doesn't affect me. I enjoy having a diverse of races and cultures visit our community. Most folks have a bad impression of Humboldt Park and this helps demonstrate that this neighborhood is not that bad. Events like this brings money to our community. Our alderman should concentrate on more important things to do in our community. I asked for help several years ago and am still waiting for it.” – Diana Licea || Chicago, IL 60642

“The Humboldt Park community wants this fest and the Alderman is trying to suppress a positive change in this community. Like the PR fest that is supported at Humboldt Park so should be this fest for ALL cultures that now live in this community. Mr. Maldonado needs to embrace change in the community not stifle it to support his own agenda. As it is, he doesn't give this park the attention it deserves. He allows garbage pileup, drug dealing, unpaved trails, broken and hazardous bridge railings, etc. If Mr. Maldonado cared about this park, which is his argument to not support Riot Fest, take care of the park everyday. NOT just when it supports his racial agenda.”—Terri Hughes || Chicago, IL 60627

“I am a homeowner directly across the street from Humboldt Park proper and Riot Fest is an amazing organization that respects and invests in the neighborhood. It cares about the community, its residents and its businesses. It needs to stay. Period.” –Dave Shand || Chicago, IL 60647

“There is no reason why Riot Fest should not be brought back ad infinitum until the end of days. I visit Humboldt Park nearly every day. I regularly walk the paths throughout the park and it has never looked better!” – Kim Ziemann || Chicago, IL 60639