



## **Support the Personal Gardens Protection Bill HB 1686 & SB 1062**

*Provide Home Food Security for Texans*

Growing numbers of Texans want to raise food for themselves, for the health of their families and the pleasure of gardening. Growing a home garden has numerous benefits:

- Accessing high-quality, fresh, nutritious food;
- Reducing and stabilizing families' food bills; and
- Providing physical and mental health benefits from growing plants and caring for animals.

Unfortunately, some cities and homeowners' associations (HOAs) limit or completely prevent Texans from exercising their rights to raise food for themselves. Reasonable restrictions make sense, but bans do not.

HB1686 and SB 1062 would prevent cities and HOAs from prohibiting their residents from having gardens, up to 6 chickens or rabbits, or up to 3 beehives, while specifically allowing reasonable restrictions such as banning roosters or requiring safe distances from neighbors' residences.

In the last session, SB 86 would have addressed this problem only with respect to backyard poultry. It passed the Senate by a vote of 29-2, was unanimously approved by the House Agriculture Committee, but was not set for a vote by the House Calendars Committee.

Since that time, the COVID-19 pandemic has given new urgency to this issue. Our dominant food production system has proven to be both fragile and subject to disruption in a crisis.

- Grocery store shelves went empty as the conventional food system was unable to adapt to new distribution needs.
- Food prices spiked, with continuing higher prices and sometimes limited availability.
- Food bank lines have been staggeringly long.
- Unemployment rates remain high, hampering Texans' ability to provide for their families.

**Passing the Personal Gardens Protection bill will assure Texas families have the means, if they desire, to produce healthy food at home. This means greater food security for Texans.**

HB 1686 and SB 1062 are supported by the Food Policy Council of San Antonio, Texas Local Food and Farm Coalition, Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association, Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance, GROW North Texas, and Grow Local South Texas.

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