

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL MAY 5 2014 CITY MANAGER AGENDA #7 pf Soto  
Up & Out

As a concerned citizen and a resident of Cambridge, I am here this evening to ask  
What is happening to freedom of speech in the city that likes to call itself the  
"People's Republic"?

Specifically, why has a civic minded Cantabrigian been threatened with arrest for  
distributing leaflets informing denizens of various neighborhoods in our fair city  
about a free film series concerning political and social issues of the utmost  
importance? In particular, for leaving said leaflets on parked cars (equated with  
littering). Now there may be a reason to object to commercial leaflets. These,  
however, are not such. (Nor is Ms Soto resorting to vandalism to get her  
message across.)

For several years now, Ms Soto has offered free of charge a monthly film  
screening at which all are welcome. She has paid for everything—film,  
refreshments, pamphlets, CDs, door prizes—out of her own pocket. The films she  
shows concern issues that are rarely (if ever) even mentioned in the MSM (that  
includes NPR, WGBH TV etc. We are beholden to campus radio stations-- the  
Jesuits of BC for 4 hrs a week early Sunday AM, and a few hours of MIT. Many  
people do not have regular access to computers. Newspaper ads are expensive.  
Flyers remain a vital and relatively inexpensive source of information. This is a  
matter of freedom of speech in the service of an imperiled democracy.

There are few enough people anywhere who are passionately devoted to peace  
and justice. And I know no one in our community who has sacrificed so much—  
certainly no one who has given more of her/himself to the increasingly difficult  
task of raising public awareness. Ms Soto is widely respected in activist circles and  
has hosted first-rate filmmakers come to discuss their work. Just one example—  
Regis Tremblay from Maine to present and comment upon his brilliant  
documentary *The Ghosts of Jeju Island*. Question: how many Americans have  
ever heard of Jeju Island? (The film exposes ecological disaster, destruction of  
indigenous culture, provocation aimed at China, the squandering of many

hundreds of millions of our tax \$\$\$ on a naval base. What if the Chinese (or Russians) sent warships/submarines to the Gulf of Mexico)

But I digress.

Surely the Cambridge Police have better things to do than threaten Ms Soto with arrest for exercising her constitutional rights, and surely the Cambridge City Manager has better things to do than attempt to stifle the free speech of an outstanding citizen who is enriching the lives of those in our community (while considerably impoverishing her modest income). She deserves to be praised, not censured or censored. As for the City Council, I would urge you to consider giving Ms Soto an award for her outstanding public service.