



Association of Directory Publishers

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## **Update: San Francisco**

March 16, 2011

To: All U.S. ADP Members

Fr: Larry

Re: San Francisco Rally Against Opt-In Ordinance

I returned to the office today after participating in Monday's rally on the steps of the San Francisco City Hall in support of jobs and First Amendment rights and against the opt-in ordinance now before the Board of Supervisors for the City and County of San Francisco.

Between 200-300 persons representing all segments of the grass roots coalition that has coalesced around this issue (San Francisco small businesses, Valley Yellow Pages, AT&T Advertising Solutions, Chinese Yellow Pages, Seccion Amarillo, IBEW, TURN, ADP, YPA, among others) were in attendance.

Below is a photograph taken during the rally from the street in front of City Hall. You'll probably recognize the familiar face in the left center of the photograph – that's ADP Director Sieg Fischer, president of Valley Yellow Pages.



The San Francisco Chronicle ran an op-ed piece written by Steve Falk, president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and found below, on page A-12 of this morning's edition:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=%2Fc%2Fa%2F2011%2F03%2F15%2FEDIJ1IBU1E.DTL>

**Banning Yellow Pages might cost businesses, jobs**  
**Steven Falk**  
**Tuesday, March 15, 2011**

The familiar Yellow Pages delivered to your home each year represent a vital connection between local small businesses and prospective customers in San Francisco. *The phone books give small businesses exposure and customers and residents access to information about local merchants.* For some small businesses, the ability to advertise in the Yellow Pages can mean the difference between success and failure, especially in today's economy.

That is why the proposed ordinance banning the unsolicited distribution of the Yellow Pages is a bad idea for San Francisco. Instead of the convenience of automatic yearly delivery, the proposal will require Yellow Page distributors, whether a phone company or a foreign language publication, to get permission before delivering a phone book. The ban will harm local small businesses, isolate low-income and ethnic communities and eliminate hundreds of local jobs.

Banning the Yellow Pages will take away one of the most effective tools of small businesses and local merchants. Research shows two-thirds of San Francisco residents use the Yellow Pages. Forcing consumers to look for businesses only online puts these small, local businesses at a disadvantage against large, national chains. Take away the Yellow Pages and you immediately tilt the playing field away from the local businesses San Franciscans value so highly.

Even in San Francisco, one of the most wired cities in America, Internet access is not universal. Many homes in the city still lack broadband Internet connections, particularly low-income households. Non-English speaking residents will also be affected. For many ethnic communities, foreign-language directories are a trusted source for finding local businesses and services. As a result, eliminating printed phone books will cut off low-income and ethnic residents across the city from needed services.

The ordinance will also devastate small publishers who specialize in targeted and foreign-language publications - potentially eliminating hundreds of local jobs for the people who publish and distribute these books. While the ordinance attempts to reduce the number of directories thrown away, these books account for only a tiny fraction of the recycling stream - far less than newspapers and postal mail. What's more, residents and businesses already have a way to opt-out of receiving the books through the industry's website - [www.yellowpagesoptout.com](http://www.yellowpagesoptout.com).

Finally, the ordinance puts the city at risk for costly litigation. The ordinance may violate the First Amendment as it singles out one industry with treatment that is different than that for all other media. The government simply does not have the right to tell publishers what they can and can't print, and with whom they can communicate.

San Francisco faces many problems that deserve the attention of its elected leaders - the Yellow Pages is not one of them. During these difficult times in our economy, we should be looking for ways to bolster small business and create jobs - not harm local merchants and leave out the city's diverse communities. This is an idea that belongs in the compost bin.

The industry will not know until noon tomorrow (Thursday) whether the opt-in ordinance will be on the agenda for next Monday's Land Use and Economic Development Committee agenda.

If it is, you can be assured that my next update will be a call to arms. In the mean while, please go to [www.keepsfconnected.com](http://www.keepsfconnected.com) to inform the Supervisors of your position on the ordinance.

I will keep you informed of our progress as it occurs.