

Door-to-door solicitors. They're annoying. They interrupt a peaceful day and distract from getting things done when we're busy. And no matter how many or few there are it's too many.

The Association has been asked what we can do about them, and how we can enforce the "No Soliciting" signs at the entrances to our community. Sadly, the first answer is – not much. We are not a gated community, our streets and sidewalks belong to the county. That makes them public property. Courts have consistently held that free speech in public places includes going into neighborhoods to promote political candidates and initiatives, offer to share a religious faith, and so-called "commercial speech" – would you like to buy my candy bars, my solar panels or my house painting service? In the face of the First Amendment, the county sheriff has little or no authority to sweep solicitors from our neighborhood. The signs at the entrances? Basically they are window dressing with no legal force behind them.

But story is a little different for individual residents. The protections of free speech end when you step off public streets onto private property. So the resident is free to put up signs that say "No Soliciting" and/ or "No Trespassing" and insist they be respected. When an unwanted solicitor comes to your door, you are within your rights to stop their pitch and call attention to your sign(s) and ask them to move along. Now. And if they are aggressive or uncooperative, you can ask for a sheriff's deputy to come and eject them for you, perhaps with a formal warning not to return. And our architectural standards allow these signs to be put up without getting an application approved in advance (Paragraph 26). But please be sure it's not excessive in its size or nature, the Association could ask you to remove one like that. Just buy a nice, professional looking one and post it where visitors can't miss it as they come to your door.