

A 166-Year-Old Luxury Retailer Says This Might Be Its 'Last' Holiday Season Due to the 'Profound Erosion' of San Francisco

John Chachas, a San Francisco resident and owner of the city's 166-year-old luxury retailer, Gumps, is fed up with the city's current environment. The high-end department store specializes in housewares, jewelry, and gifts, and has been in San Francisco's Union Square area since 1861.

Chachas took out a full-page ad in *The San Francisco Chronicle* on Sunday to voice his complaints, stating that it may be the "last" holiday season for the older-than-the-Edison-bulb retailer due to the "profound erosion of this city's current conditions."

"San Francisco now suffers from a 'tyranny of the minority' – behavior and actions of the few that jeopardize the livelihood of many," Chachas wrote in the ad.

He went on to highlight the challenges being faced in the city due to remote work, decreased foot traffic, and the "destructive" city policies that have allowed the homeless to "openly distribute and use illegal drugs, to harass the public and to defile the city's streets."

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Chachas directly called on the governor, mayor, and city supervisors to take "immediate action" to clean up the streets, remove encampments, and enforce new policies.

“San Franciscans deserve better than the current condition of the city,” he added.

The response from Chronicle readers was mixed. “Read the tea leaves, Mayor London Breed and other elected officials. Do your job or we will find politicians who really care enough to make a difference,” James Hargarten of San Francisco wrote in a letter to the *Chronicle*.



Others disagreed with Chachas' methods.

"While I agree that San Francisco has work to do, his self-righteous tone reeks of the privilege that led the city down this path to destruction," Michelle Vizinau, a resident of Stockton, CA, wrote in another letter to the *Chronicle* following the ad.

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Still, Chachas told The San Francisco Standard that he has heard overwhelming support since the ad ran.

"No one's told me, 'Oh my, how uncaring you are toward the homeless,'" Chachas told the outlet. "I received multiple responses saying 'truth to power,' 'You're saying exactly what everybody believes.' It's just that no one listens."

Since 2019, 92 retailers have closed up shop in San Francisco's Union Square area, according to The San Francisco Standard.

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