

HOUSING NOT HANDCUFFS

e-news update

February 2018

Dear Supporters and Endorsers of the Housing Not Handcuffs campaign,

Our campaign continues to grow, over 650 endorsements so far! [Keep encouraging your friends, colleagues, and elected officials to endorse.](#)

Follow on social media

#HNHNow



If you have submissions for the next newsletter, send them to skang@nlchp.org **by March 14.**

Black History Month: Race & Homelessness 101

While the intersection of race and homelessness is relevant all year, Black History Month is an opportune moment to specifically acknowledge how the history of America has created racial disparity in poverty. While African Americans make up 12.5% of the U.S population overall, they comprise [40.4% of the homeless population](#). This did not happen by accident, and it will not be undone by accident. Issues that have been created through racist policy and perpetuated through discriminatory social norms cannot be solved with a “colorblind” mentality.

Even though the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (FHA) made it unlawful to explicitly discriminate based on race or ethnicity, the damage had already been done. Neighborhoods had been intentionally segregated for decades and resources critical to economic mobility such as public schools, access to good doctors and healthy food, were mostly accessible only to overwhelmingly white neighborhoods. [Here is a quick video](#) that illustrates this point well. And almost 50 years after passage of the FHA, some explicitly discriminatory actions still occur and often go unchallenged due to the difficulty of proving a case. For example, [people of color are shown fewer rental units and more often denied leases based on credit history than white renters](#).

We expect the U.S. to submit its next periodic report to the [U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) later this year, which will provide advocates with an opportunity to draw attention to racial disparities in housing, homelessness, and criminal justice. During the last review of the U.S., in response to a [submission](#) by the Law Center, the Committee specifically [called on the U.S. to “abolish the criminalization of homelessness”](#) and asked the government to follow up on steps it has taken to do so in the upcoming review.

Everyone deserves a safe, adequate home to live in, no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other aspect of identity. By focusing on improving the

situation for the most marginalized populations, all of society will benefit.

Campaign Updates

HUD and USICH critique encampment sweeps in San Diego

In November, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) conducted a site visit to San Diego during a Hepatitis A outbreak among people experiencing homelessness. The city responded to the outbreak with heavy sweeps of homeless encampments. Following urging from the Law Center to be more vocal regarding criminalization of homelessness, HUD and USICH [sent a letter](#) to city and county officials, expressing concern that the efforts of law enforcement personnel to clear areas for sanitization was complicating the ability of outreach workers to connect people with housing and services.

HUD and USICH strongly recommended using trained outreach workers rather than law enforcement personnel to interact with people living in the encampments. They asserted that law enforcement personnel should be involved in efforts of safety and well-being of people experiencing homelessness and outreach workers, not as leads for interacting with the homeless population. The letter also expressed concern regarding the use of temporary city-run encampments and called for temporary or permanent housing for people living in encampments to be provided as soon as possible.

This letter could be useful for advocates objecting to sweeps in their own communities. [View the letter and other policy resources on the Housing Not Handcuffs website.](#)

New York Project with Goldman Sachs

On Friday, January 26th, the Law Center partnered with Goldman Sachs, Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP, and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP to conduct a pro bono survey project at the Holy Apostle Soup Kitchen in New York City. The goal of the survey was to gather information from homeless individuals on their experiences with law enforcement.

The project began with a training session hosted by Goldman Sachs and conducted by the Law Center and staff of Care for the Homeless. The session included information on the causes of homelessness, the impact of criminalization on homeless individuals, and techniques on how to properly conduct the survey. Nineteen volunteer attorneys attended the training and then surveyed over 90 homeless individuals. The data collected is being analyzed and will be combined with national data to impact policy recommendations and lawsuits regarding criminalization. [View pictures on Facebook here.](#)

Police trainings call

Sparked by conversations between HNH participants, the Law Center hosted a call about police trainings, highlighting the critical need to educate law enforcement professionals about homelessness. A new effort emerged to create a directory of law enforcement agencies and related resources documenting a) Homeless Outreach Teams, b) training curricula for law enforcement on interaction with persons experiencing homelessness, and c) other relevant diversion teams/programs in place.

Ultimately, we hope this will help establish best practices to effectively and humanely manage their interactions with local homeless populations.

The Law Center would appreciate any and all help in developing this directory. Please contact Sara Kang at skang@nlchp.org with questions/concerns and relevant/helpful resources (general info, websites, etc.).

[Sign on to NLIHC's Letter to Congress](#)

NLIHC has organized a sign on letter to Congress concerning Trump's proposal to increase rents and impose work requirements in federal affordable housing programs. Here is a [fact sheet](#) on the drafted legislation as well as some [talking points](#), explaining why such proposals are harmful and misguided.

[You can read and sign onto the letter here.](#) **The deadline to sign on is March 16.**

Announcements

Quarterly Convening of the HNH Campaign

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

Thursday, March 15
1:00 pm ET / 10:00 am PT

HOUSING
NOT HANDCUFFS
Web Conference

Register at <http://ow.ly/1frp3oipaeo>



Use of Campaign Branding

We encourage campaign endorsers to link relevant events to the national Housing Not Handcuffs campaign. Please see the guidelines for branding your materials [here](#).

HOUSING
NOT HANDCUFFS

In the News

In Justice Today, Feb. 20

[The Criminalization of Homelessness: An explainer](#)

The Orange County Register, Feb. 19

[County scrambles to place homeless people in motel rooms in deal to resume clearing of riverbed encampments](#)

The Denver Post, Feb. 19

[Committee hearing for Colorado's homeless Right to Rest Act delayed](#)

ABC News, Feb. 15

[US judge leads lawyers, others on trip to homeless camp](#)

The Nation, Feb. 9

[A New Housing-Rights Movement Has the Real-Estate Industry Running Scared](#)

The New York Times, Jan. 24

[The U.S. Can No Longer Hide From Its Deep Poverty Problem](#)

The Denver Post, Jan. 9

[\\$120 million plan for giant affordable housing project in Lakewood raises questions, concerns](#)

The Seattle Times, Jan. 6

[Olympia gets rid of its anti-panhandling rules following state Supreme Court decision](#)

Baltimore Sun, Jan. 4

[Baltimore court expands tenant aid in housing cases](#)

WV Living, Jan. 3

[Speaking for the Homeless](#)

The St. Augustine Record, Jan. 2

[From Pensacola to Miami, Florida cities wrestled with panhandling in wake of U.S. District Court ruling](#)

Huffington Post, Dec. 21

[It Doesn't Make Any Sense To Arrest People Who Are Homeless](#)

**NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY**

This newsletter was designed, drafted, and distributed by the
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
nlchp.org

on behalf of the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign
housingnohandcuffs.org