

IN JUST TIMES

a publication of the

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY



Changing Laws, Changing Lives

December 2015

Stay Connected

[National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#)



♥ DONATE NOW »

Table of Contents

[Education Legal Clinic](#)

[Sports Illustrated](#)

[New Documentary](#)

Dear Friends,

As 2015 draws to a close, I'm taking a moment to reflect on all we've accomplished this year at the Law Center – with your support and that of our many friends and allies – and to [ask for your continued support as we move forward](#).

We've achieved critical, potentially paradigm-shifting results in our fight against the criminalization of homelessness:



Maria Foscarinis
Executive Director

- In just the past few months (but reflecting years of work) [we won strong action from key federal agencies](#) that is already having an impact in communities across the country.

- We won positive results at the city level, working with local partners to defeat or prevent adoption of criminalizing laws in places including Miami, Deland and Gainesville, FL; Minneapolis; Madison, WI; and more.
- We won affirmative protections for the dignity and equality for homeless people, including Homeless Bill of Rights introduced in HI, CA, OR, CO, IN, and enacted in Madison, WI, again working with our partners.
- We brought together a broad group of activists and allies at our [National Forum on the Human Right to Housing](#) to develop a new initiative to turn the energy and resources now being focused on criminalizing homeless people to housing them instead – working with [model policies](#) we assembled.
- And we worked to reform systems to prevent vulnerable people from becoming homeless, including the successful introduction of new bills to reinstate the federal protections for tenants living in foreclosed properties – at risk of eviction through no fault of their own – that expired last year, while also working at the state level, achieving enactment of new laws in North Carolina and Florida.
- We worked to protect survivors of domestic violence – a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children, who often must choose between remaining with their abusers or losing their homes – by pressing for [strong implementing regulations for the new housing rights](#) we worked to enact in the 2013 VAWA reauthorization.
- And very significantly, we worked to protect the rights and address the immediate needs of homeless children and youth, and to protect their futures. Our training, [materials](#), [webinars](#) and impact litigation positively affected millions of homeless children and youth across the country, and directly reached at least 250,000.
- Finally, we reached millions of people with our [media outreach and coverage](#), shining a light of the needs of homeless Americans and supporting our work to shift policies and change systems, including coverage and an editorial in the [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Huffington Post](#), [NPR](#), and [The Atlantic](#),

There is much more to be done. But we've laid a particularly strong foundation this for even greater progress in 2016, and we must redouble our efforts to do so.

Thank you for being part of our work. I hope you'll support us so we can end the year in as strong position as possible for the work ahead. [Any donation, large or small, will be greatly appreciated!](#)

Many thanks and best wishes for the holidays,

Maria

Children and Youth Legal Clinic in NY




The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty observed Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week by holding its [first legal clinic](#) on **Thursday, November 19th for children and youth experiencing homelessness**. The event, which NY-based Care for the Homeless, Goldman Sachs, and Sullivan & Cromwell helped to organize, was held at the Briarwood Family Shelter in Queens, New York.

The goal of the clinic was to determine barriers homeless students face in New York City and to give legal advice to individual families. Attorneys from [Goldman Sachs, Sullivan & Cromwell, Sheppard Mullin, and DLA Piper](#) braved a cold and rainy Thursday evening to help with the event and to provide free legal consultations to families with issues surrounding access to education.

Children and their families from the shelter spent their early evening sharing a hot meal with the volunteer attorneys. During dinner, the Law Center gave a brief 'know-your-rights' presentation about their rights under McKinney-Vento. Afterwards, the families sat down with several attorneys to talk about their problems, better understand their rights, and develop strategies for overcoming them. **These consultations proved that even though enrollment season is over, some schools remain noncompliant with their legal obligations under**

McKinney-Vento and, as a result, many children and youth experiencing homelessness continue to face barriers in attending and participating in school. We are working to link some families with ongoing pro bono assistance and excited to use the information we learned and relationships we formed to make systemic changes to help families around New York.

**Check us out in the December 7th issue of
Sports Illustrated!**



HOMELESSNESS
CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE INCLUDING
YOUNG ATHLETES

Thank you to the 2015 McKinney-Vento Award winners: Sports Illustrated, Senator Sherrod Brown, Latham & Watkins LLP, and University of the Incarnate Word lineman Roberto "Bobby" Limon for advancing solutions to help young athletes and all those affected by homelessness and poverty.

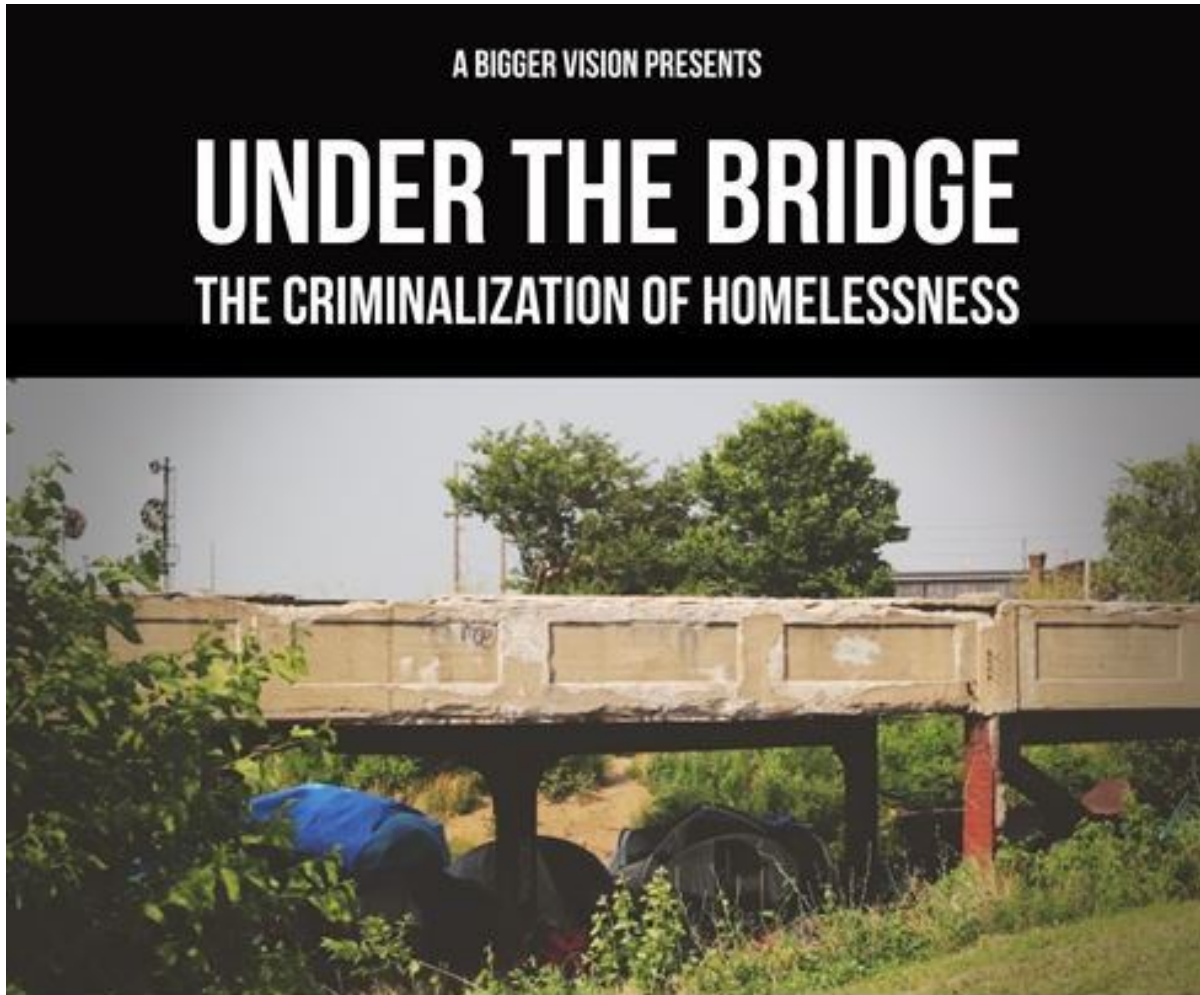
**NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY**

Get off the bench. Join our fight to end homelessness and poverty.
Donate now: www.nlchp.org/donate

Thank you again to our 2015 McKinney-Vento honorees for advancing solutions to help young athletes and all those affected by homelessness and poverty.

Join our fight to end homelessness and poverty -

[Donate today.](#)



On Wednesday, December 2nd, the Law Center partnered with the National Coalition for the Homeless and A Bigger Vision to present the film premiere of **a new must-see documentary**, [*Under the Bridge: The Criminalization of Homelessness*](#).

The film follows the residents of the Davidson Street homeless encampment formerly located under a bridge in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana, and **shines a spotlight on the growing problem of visible homelessness and one city's attempt to hide the people it should be helping**. Through the stories of individual campers, the film highlights the foolishness of criminalization policies by demonstrating how the ultimate destruction of the Davidson Street

encampment – in a city with far fewer shelter beds and affordable housing units to meet the need – **merely moved the residents from the community they called home to other nearby encampments.**

This film was written and produced by Don Sawyer and A Bigger Vision, along with award-winning Senior Producer, Stephen Talbot, who has won two Emmy Awards and two Peabody Awards for his work in broadcast journalism. John MacGibbon, who also boasts multiple Emmy Awards, served as co-writer and film editor.

Prior to the film’s public premiere, the Law Center and filmmakers partnered with the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and Department of Justice to offer a [special extended preview of the film to HUD and Department of Justice officials](#). Over 50 attended, in-person and by live webcast the half-hour extended clip and subsequent discussion, moderated by Bryan Greene, HUD General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, HUD, and featuring Ann Oliva, HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs, Bob Bullock, Senior Counsel, DOJ Office for Access to Justice, Janet Hostetler, Deputy Director, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, Don Sawyer, Director/Producer, A Bigger Vision, and Albert Townsend, Faces of Homelessness Speaker’s Bureau, National Coalition for the Homeless. Participants were enthusiastic about opportunities for follow up and eager to work to ensure HUD and DOJ were working to prevent criminalization.

The audience at the film’s official premiere was equally enthusiastic, remaining after the film to ask questions of a panel of national experts on the criminalization of homelessness, including representatives of the Law Center, the National Coalition for the Homeless, and Richard Cho of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

The film is scheduled for its next screening in Boston later this month.

Changing Laws. Changing Lives.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness.

With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.

www.nlchp.org