

IN JUST TIMES

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NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY



Changing Laws, Changing Lives

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Table of Contents

[McKinney-Vento Awards](#)
[New Law on School Access](#)
[Honoring Eric Holder](#)
[Housing Crisis](#)
[DOJ Takes a Stand](#)
[Endorse Now!](#)

Dear Friends,

Imagine facing violence at home and having to choose between staying with your abuser or becoming homeless. Imagine calling 911 for help and instead being *evicted* from your home *because* you called for help. Imagine being harassed by a landlord demanding sexual favors as a condition of renting your own home.

Domestic and sexual violence are [a leading cause of homelessness](#), especially for women and their children. The Law Center has worked for years to break this cycle, as part of our mission to end and prevent homelessness. Last month the Law Center and our allies made important headway, when the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) issued new guidance and a new regulation](#) that will help break this unfair and dangerous cycle.



Maria Foscarinis
Executive Director

[The new guidance](#) targets “nuisance ordinances,” local laws that penalize victims when police are called “too often” to a certain residence. These laws, which have increased in recent years, typically force landlords to evict them or face fines, loss of rental permits, or property foreclosure. Victims of violence in their residences must then choose between not calling police—and face danger alone—or risk eviction and homelessness. In some cases, women who have opted not to call for help have still been evicted because someone else overheard violent abuse and called 911.

[The new regulation](#) formalizes legal standards for harassment in housing, including sexual harassment, as prohibited under the federal Fair Housing Act. For example, it clarifies that harassment rising to the level of a hostile environment is a violation of the Fair Housing Act, as is *quid pro quo* harassment - when landlords, or their agents, seek sexual favors as a condition of securing or remaining in housing.

A final HUD regulation to implement the 2013 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which broadens housing rights for survivors, is still pending. The Law Center pushed for the [2013 amendments](#), which protects survivors from eviction based on the actions of their abusers in any federally supported housing, broadening the rights we originally won in 2006. The Law Center also weighed in on [the regulations](#) and is now waiting for them to be issued - Stay tuned.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Please help us spread the word so that survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault know their rights—every day of the year.

Thank you for your support on these timely and critically important issues.

Law Center Celebrates Its 18th Annual McKinney-Vento Awards



Chief Executive Officer of Monumental Sports & Entertainment Ted Leonsis presents the Stewart B. McKinney Award to Washington Wizards’ John Wall.

Photo Credit: Digital Memoirs Productions, LLC

The Law Center held its 18th annual [McKinney-Vento Awards Ceremony](#) on September 22nd at The Liaison Capitol Hill. Award winning anchor and correspondent for CBS News and CBS Sports Dana Jacobson served as the evening's Emcee, as U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Washington Wizards' John Wall, Dechert LLP and Ms. Angela Spencer were honored for their work to end and prevent homelessness in America. Founder, Chairman, Majority Owner and Chief Executive Officer of Monumental Sports & Entertainment Ted Leonsis also made an appearance as he honored John Wall for his achievements. Please visit our [blog](#) to view the event highlights!

New Law on School Access for Homeless Children and Youth Goes Into Effect October 1

With schools already back in session, important changes made by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act went into effect starting October 1. These changes strengthen the educational rights of homeless children and youth and provide additional funding to state and local educational agencies across the country to better identify and provide much needed educational continuity and stability to homeless students. State and local educational agencies have more responsibilities under the law. For more information, check out the Frequently Asked Questions [document](#) recently updated by the Law Center and the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY). The Law Center is working to update and release other materials this fall.

The Law Center Honors Former U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.



Maria Foscarinis with Eric H. Holder, Jr. at the Law Center's LEAP Luncheon on October 6, 2016
Photo credit: Janelle Fernandez, Law Center

On October 6, 2016 Eric H. Holder, Jr. received the Outstanding Achievement Award at the [Lawyer's Executive Advisory Partners'](#) Luncheon, hosted by the Law Center and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP. Eric Holder served as the 82nd Attorney General of the United States from 2009 to 2015, under President Barack Obama. He was the first African American to serve in that position. Mr. Holder is currently a partner at Covington & Burling LLP. Please visit our [blog](#) to view the event highlights!

Missed Chance to Address Housing Crisis

The Law Center is [calling](#) on Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) to reconsider his bill to create a middle income tax credit. Wyden, ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, is proposing a tax credit that would target incentives to developers to create housing for people at median area income, and also includes incentives without any targeting at all. The Law Center is calling on Wyden and his colleagues to use federal resources to incentivize housing for extremely low income people.

DOJ Stands Up for People Experiencing Homelessness in Seattle



Photo Credit: [Pixabay](#)

Last week, the U.S. Department of Justice sent a [letter](#) to several Seattle City Council members stating that legislative proposal CB 118794 is consistent with the constitutional rights of homeless people, by protecting them from the criminalization of homelessness. The Seattle City Council Human Services and Public Health Committee is currently considering a proposal that would offer protections to homeless persons living in outdoor public places, while also protecting the health and safety of all residents. The Law Center also submitted a letter to the Seattle City Council urging support of the proposal as a sensible policy that will help the city to reduce unauthorized homeless encampments, implement permanent housing strategies, and bring the city's response to visible homelessness in line with the recommendations of the federal government. See the Law Center's [press release](#) for more info!

Do You Believe the Criminalization of Homelessness Must End?

If So, Endorse Our Campaign Now!

In order to end the crisis of homelessness, the criminalization of homelessness must end immediately. All persons experiencing homelessness should instead have access to affordable housing, education, health care, employment, income, and other opportunities and services that allow all to live with dignity. These are the only solutions to the crisis of homelessness from a moral, legal, fiscal, and policy perspective.

The Law Center and over 100 of our partners are launching a new campaign on **November 15th** to call for the end to the criminalization of homelessness and a major national shift

toward effective housing policies. [Join or endorse](#) our campaign now and ensure we have a successful launch!

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