

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Contact: Tristia Bauman

202-638-2535 ext. 102

tbauman@nlchp.org

DENVER CAMPING BAN TRIAL STARTS TUESDAY

DENVER, CO. – Mere days after a national study showed that courts often side with homeless people against ordinances criminalizing acts of survival, tomorrow Denver will start a trial against three poor people for violation of the Unauthorized Urban Camping Ban, a controversial city ordinance that criminalizes sleeping on the streets.

“Courts have repeatedly demonstrated that criminalizing the survival acts of people who are forced to live outside is not a sound strategy for addressing the problem of homelessness,” said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director at the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) (Law Center). “It is a shame that Denver is wasting resources to enforce this cruel and ineffective camping ban.”

A majority of the lawsuits filed to challenge criminalization laws and enforcement practices have found success in court. According to a [new report](#) released last week by the Law Center, 57% of cases challenging restrictions on camping in public, 75% of cases challenging evictions of homeless encampments and seizure of homeless persons’ property, and 100% of cases challenging panhandling laws over the last two years have resulted in favorable outcomes for homeless people and their advocates.

Advocates and homeless people in Denver have been working to overturn the city’s camping ban as part of the Western Regional Advocacy Project’s [Homeless Bill of Rights](#) Campaign and the national [Housing Not Handcuffs](#) Campaign. The campaigns are advocating (and litigating) against the criminalization of homelessness and for policies that increase access to housing and services.

Jerry Burton, Terese Howard and Randy Russell, the defendants in this week’s trial in Denver, face up to a year in prison and a thousand dollar fine if convicted. The trial is expected to last three days.

The trial will begin at 8:30 a.m. MT Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at the Lindsey Flanigan Courthouse, 520 W. Colfax, Denver Colorado 80204. Defendants will hold a press conference at 7:15 a.m. MT in front of the courthouse doors.