

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

HOUSING NOT HANDCUFFS

**EMBARGOED UNTIL NOVEMBER 15, 2016 at 11a.m.
ET**

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HOUSING NOT HANDCUFFS REPORT SHOWS INCREASE IN THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 15, 2016) - Today, the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty ("Law Center") releases its Housing Not Handcuffs report which shows that the criminalization of homelessness continues to increase throughout the country, despite strong evidence showing it is counter-productive and expensive. A national press conference will be held today at 11 a.m. ET to discuss the findings of the report. To register, call 202.638.2535 x112 or email llima@nlchp.org.

This is happening in conjunction with the November 15, 2016 launch of the [Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign](#) - initiated by the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) and the [National Coalition for the Homeless](#), with over 100 local and national organizations involved. The Campaign has endorsed a series of [Model Policies](#) that, if enacted at the federal, state, and local level, would significantly reduce homelessness in a way that is cost-effective and supports the civil rights and human dignity of people experiencing homelessness.

“Laws that criminalize homelessness are expensive, counterproductive, potentially unconstitutional--and just plain wrong,” said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. **“Any government that is serious about ending homelessness will focus its energy and resources on housing**

homeless people, not criminalizing them.”

The Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign is supported by a broad group of Americans.

- **“The use of the criminal justice system to punish those whose only crime is being poor and without shelter is not worth of our great nation,”** The Honorable Eric Holder, former Attorney General said. “These laws are unconstitutional and are bad public policy.”
- **“Last year, Syracuse became one of the first cities in the country to end veteran homelessness, and we are well on our way to ending chronic homelessness as well,”** said Syracuse, NY Chief of Police, Frank L. Fowler. “We are getting homeless people off the street through housing, not handcuffs, which lets police do the job they are best trained to do and service providers do theirs, saving taxpayer dollars and saving lives, and making a difference that our residents see and feel every day.”
- **“My struggle with schizoaffective disorder left me without a home, but the law in Tempe, Arizona left me without even a place to sit,”** said David Pirtle, a formerly-homeless individual, now Public Education Coordinator at the National Coalition for the Homeless. “After walking miles in the blistering heat, I was threatened with a ticket for the crime of sitting in public. Criminalizing homelessness doesn't make it go away. It just makes a terrible situation even worse to endure.”

About the Housing Not Handcuffs Report:

This is the 12 [national report](#) by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty on the criminalization of homelessness in America. It analyzes ten years of data on the criminalization of homelessness in 187 cities across the country.

About the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty:

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

About the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign:

The Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign calls upon local, state and federal governments to

end the criminalization of homelessness immediately, and believes that 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.

For additional info, visit www.housingnohandcuffs.org.

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