

California Right to Rest Act Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign



November, 2016

Hearing directly from, and amplifying the voices of the people most impacted by homelessness and poverty has been crucial to the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) since our inception. In 2010, WRAP members began doing outreach documenting peoples daily experience interacting with police, private security guards, and the criminal legal system. The outreach survey has 12 questions gathering information on how our communities have been harassed, ticketed and arrested for engaging in basic life-sustaining activities as well as other questions, for example, if people know a safe/legal place to sleep at night. The data from the street outreach surveys is how WRAP decides campaign priorities, research, artwork and direction for our community organizing.

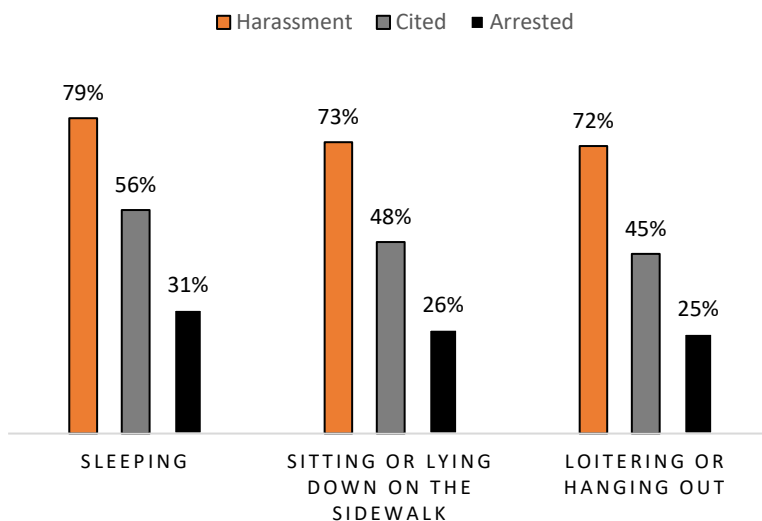


All of the 721 people we have surveyed in California answered a consistent set of questions and all did so only for the opportunity to speak “unfiltered” to the broader community about what is really happening on our nation's streets to poor, disabled, and homeless community members. Sleeping, sitting, lying and loitering were the most common activities that poor and homeless people expressed being targeted, cited and arrested for engaging in.

There can be no more denying that “Broken Windows,” “Quality of Life,” “Civil Sidewalks,” “Public Commons for Everyone,” and “Safer Cities” initiatives are anything less than a reincarnation of “Ugly Laws,” “Anti-Okie laws,” “Sundown Towns,” “Bracero Treaty,” and “Jim Crow” when you hear directly the voices of those who are the targets of today’s laws and campaigns.

The main “illegal offenses” that homeless people are being targeted with:

- **79%** for sleeping, with 56% of these people cited and 31% arrested
- **73%** for sitting or lying down, with 48% of these people cited and 26% arrested
- **72%** for loitering or hanging out, with 45% of these people cited and 25% arrested



Other findings include:

- 67% reported being harassed by Police without them using ANY law.
- 75% reported being harassed by private security.
- 58% reported that their harassment, citation or arrest was because they “appeared homeless.”
- 28% reported having bench warrants issued for their arrest.
- 8% felt that police always respect their rights

We then asked:

Do you know of places where it is safe and legal for you to sleep outside?

- 79% No
- 21% Yes

We also spoke to people about what the harassment and profiling looked like:

Do you think that you have been ticketed because of your...

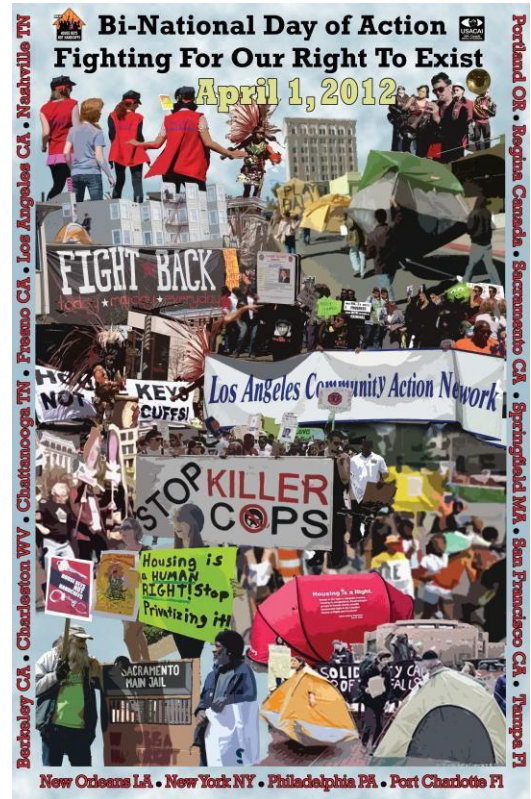
- 80% economic status
- 36% race
- 20% gender
- 24% disability

Do police sometimes harass you without using the law?

- 67% Yes
- 28% No
- 5% Don't Know

Have you ever seen or encountered private security guards hassling people, ordering people away, or otherwise policing public sidewalks or parks?

- 75% Yes
- 21% No
- 4% Don't Know



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