

# Western Regional Advocacy Project Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign



Artwork by Ronnie Goodman



# HOMELESS BILL OF RIGHTS PRESENTATION TALKING POINTS

Below are talking points for the presentation. Each slide has a main point and supporting points you can adapt for your audience.

## Slide 1: Report Cover

### Main Point:

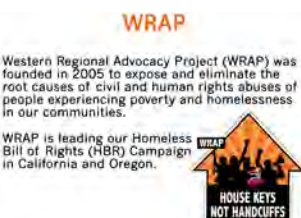
Created by Ronnie Goodman a homeless man in SF and a person who sees his role as an artist to lift up and represent his community.



### Supporting Point:

As with all our artwork this piece was created through a give and take process between artist and organizers.

## Slide 2: WRAP



### Main Point:

This is the Mission statement of WRAP, created by the members. A Mission statement defines the reason why we created WRAP in the first place.

## Slide 3: Member List

### Main Point:

Current list of core WRAP members. Core members are the organizations that drive WRAP and that **staff are accountable to**. Core members take on specific responsibilities of outreach, community forums, participation in workgroups, community based hiring/inclusion, pay membership dues and practice of non-violence.



Supporting Points:

WRAP also has allied organizations that are active in workgroups, outreach, actions and setting campaign priorities.



**Slide 4: Organization Endorsers - (handout of endorsers)**

Main Point:

As of December 5, 2014 we have **136 organizations** working collaboratively in California and Oregon.

Supporting Point:

Up to date endorsement list and endorsement form is on WRAP website.

**Slide 5: What we are working for**

Main Point:

Our campaign priorities were identified through our community forums and street outreach. The strategies that guide our campaign are;



1. Develop a campaign structure model which can be easily adapted to specific states in which a need to introduce a HBR campaign arises.
2. Increase the number and quality of organizational endorsements and legislative support for our HBR Campaign.
3. Work with organizational supporters of our efforts to increase visibility and publicity for the HBR Campaign in local communities. This can be achieved by conducting presentations, hosting webinars or conducting street outreach to local residents.
4. Create consistent and ongoing messaging which corresponds to our campaign goals.
5. Work with groups possessing different talents and skills to effectively develop the various components of a national campaign.

Supporting Points:

While WRAP organizations primarily come from communities of homeless people, we also recognize that the solution to homelessness lies in creating

a just society and our campaign strives to ensure that ALL people have the basic right to live where they choose without fear of harassment and criminalization.

## Slide 6: Why this is important - (handout: street outreach factsheet)



### Main Point:

\* From September 2010 to May 2011 we surveyed 336 members of the homeless community that self-identified as mentally ill as phase one of the outreach process. The results of this survey can be found on

our website at [wraphome.org](http://wraphome.org) on the civil rights page. Since August 2011 to the present day we have been successful in documenting **1388** additional outreaches to homeless people who have experienced very similar civil rights violations as those in the first phase of outreach.

\* All of the people we've surveyed 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.

### Supporting Point:

Our findings include:

- \* 70% reported being harassed by Police without them using ANY law.
- \* 76% reported being harassed by private security.
- \* 53% reported that their harassment, citation or arrest was because they "appeared homeless."
- \* 26% reported having bench warrants issued for their arrest.
- \* 7% felt that police always respect their rights

Do police sometimes harass you without using the law?

- \* 70% Yes
- \* 24% No
- \* 6% Don't Know

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

- \* 76% Yes

- \* 19% No
- \* 5% Don't Know

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

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

- \* 77% economic status
- \* 35% race
- \* 24% gender
- \* 24% disability

### Slide 7: So called "Quality of Life" Laws



#### Main Point:

These are but a mere sample of the most common laws being passed in city after city after town in California, Oregon and across the U.S. Short of walking everything you do can and will be enforced as a violation of the law.

Research conducted for WRAP shows:

**Each year, California's overflowing jails spend \$300 million or more to incarcerate homeless people for minor "quality-of-life" infractions.**

On an average night, 7,726 homeless Californians spend the night in jail. Average jail costs are \$110/night, so counties are spending almost \$1 million each day to incarcerate homeless people. With more accurate accounting, this figure could be as high at \$1.7 billion annually.

#### Supporting Points:

These laws effect everyone: Young kids outside public housing, day laborers on the corner, SRO (Single Room Occupancy) residents whose living room is the street in front of their hotels, homeless people, people escaping domestic violence (that are then forced to hide from the police rather than be protected by them), mentally ill people, who by far get impacted the most with these laws, spiritual organizations that believe in justice. All of us benefit when we join together and demand that we all have a right to exist and nobody gets the authority of LAW to criminalize our presence.

## Slide 8: Historical Criminalization (handout: criminalization fact sheet)

### Main Point:

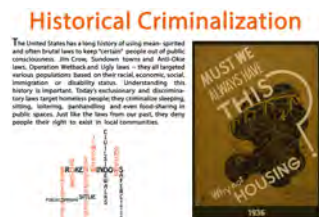
This campaign is not a response to an isolated set of discriminatory policies against those who are disenfranchised. Instead, it speaks against a history of society using the law in its opposite intention. Law can be used to coerce, to humiliate, to dehumanize, but that is not the intention of law. There is a reason why there is an enduring image of justice being blind, it is blind to power dynamics. Law is only meaningful when it protects all.

### Supporting Points:

\* One thing about the discriminatory laws of the past and the anti-homeless laws we see today is that if the goal is to decrease the area of certain people, they unfortunately work!! When one side has 24-hour policing, private security guards, arcane laws and the blessing to enforce the laws in a discriminatory fashion, you can focus your efforts on specific neighborhoods (or what today are called Business Improvement Districts) and in a short time the people being targeted will, in fact, leave. To be replaced by others and the process goes on and on.

\* Our campaign says to local governments “you have abused your power and therefore you can no longer pass/enforce laws to criminalize a person for the acts of resting, eating, sleeping.”

1936 poster was put out by Mayor and Housing Authority Director as public education and support for new deal era programs. In 1937 what we today call HUD was created by the Federal Government, Mayor’s have an alternative to criminalization.



## Slide 9: Advent of Contemporary Homelessness/ Cause and Effect

### Main Point:

- The federal government’s policy decision to defund HUD is the primary cause of contemporary mass homelessness.



## Supporting Points:

- Government officials viewed the widespread emergence of homelessness in the 1980s as a temporary local problem and set up emergency shelters and homeless assistance programs.
- These efforts have failed to address the underlying problem of insufficient low-income housing funding.

## Slide 10: Vicious Cycle of Homeless Policy

### Vicious Cycle of Homeless Policy



### Main Point:

- Since passage of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1987, the federal government has created several homeless plans but they continue to fail because they lack political will, adequate funding for actual housing, and implementation.

## Supporting Points:

- The federal government has replaced tens of billions of HUD housing dollars with a few billion homeless assistance dollars.
- Then HUD requires 355 ten-year plans to end homelessness that cover 860 cities, yet homelessness continues to grow.
- The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH) continues McKinney's limited strategies and funding.

## Slide 11: What is the Campaign (campaign fact sheet)

### Main Point:

Laws that segregate, make criminals of people based on their status rather than their behavior, or prohibit certain people's right to be in public spaces are not just sad relics from the past: Today, numerous laws infringe on poor people's ability to exist in public space or obtain basic needs such as housing, employment, and equal

### What is the Campaign

We are working towards the creation of a powerful social justice movement that is driven by local community organizing. The HBR campaign is a way of working collectively with many different groups and talents to address the injustices which we face in our communities. We understand how power operates and we know that it will take more than a piece of legislation to create justice in our society. We also know that by organizing, by connecting our issues, and by creating relevant organizing tools such as petitions and outreach, we are building the power that will eventually enable a more decent society.



protection under the law. Our Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign (HBR) stands on the shoulders of social justice campaigns of the past to alleviate poverty and homelessness while protecting homeless and poor people from unjust laws and ensuring all people's right to exist in public spaces.

### Supporting Point:

#### Goals:

1. Demand addressing homelessness and poverty from a social-justice perspective of addressing racism, classism and similar issues.
2. Overturn laws aimed at removing poor and homeless people from public space.
3. Connect current laws targeting today's poor and homeless people to historical civil rights abuses such as Sundown Towns and Anti-Okie laws.
4. Build a framework which is responsive to street outreach and shares power with impoverished people.
5. Develop statewide power analysis to understand the legislative political scene in California and Oregon.
6. Support organizations and individuals working on HBR campaigns in their respective states.
7. Obtain resolutions in support of the HBR principles.
8. Remove bureaucratic and other obstacles which prevent people from escaping homelessness.



**Slide 12: Ways to get involved** (handout campaign fact sheet)

#### Main Point:

We know that by creating relevant organizing tools and by connecting our issues, we are building the power to create a social justice movement that will eventually enable a more decent society. We will keep pushing for homeless and poor people's rights even if we are not granted an immediate victory, knowing that one day, we will see them become law.



## Slide 13: Join us

### Main Point:

Give everyone local contact info and make sure they signed the sign in sheets, petitions, etc. Encourage them to sign up for our newsletter(s). Let them know that all of our materials, forms, research artwork etc are on website. That we work hard to keep the information current and always, as with all wrap members, information on our websites is downloadable and free.

Join the Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign

[www.wraphome.org](http://www.wraphome.org)

