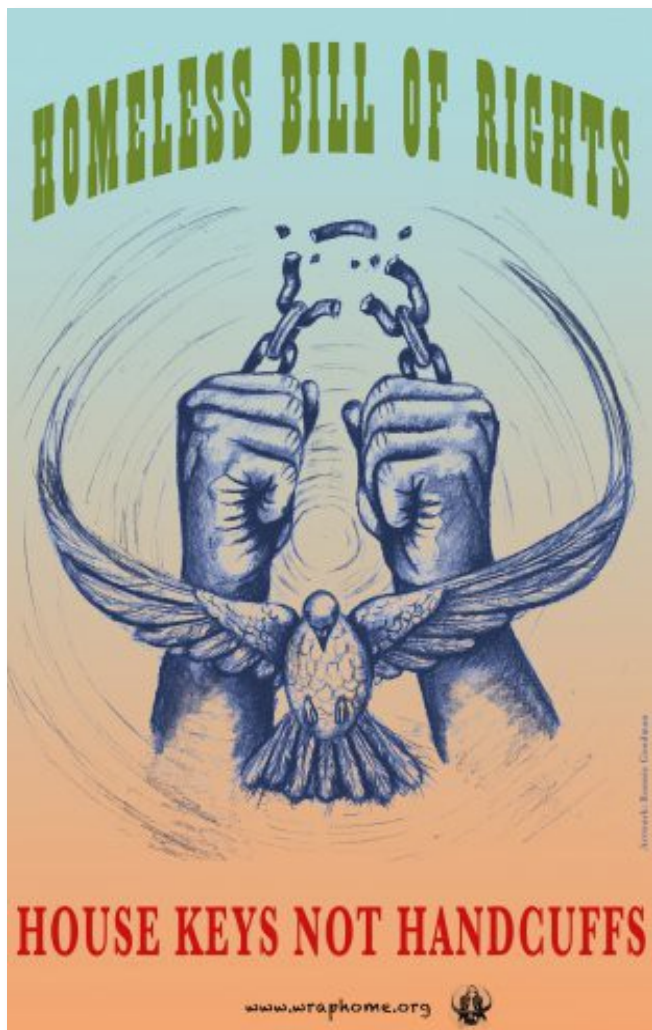


# Right to Rest Model Legislation Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign



January 29, 2015

*Laws that segregate, make criminals of people based on their housing 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. Our Right to Rest campaign stands on the shoulders of social justice campaigns of the past, as we are working 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.*



Our Right to Rest (#Right2Rest) Campaign in Oregon, California & Colorado will create legislation that protects the following rights and prohibits the enforcement of any local laws that violate these rights:

- 1. Right to move freely, rest, sleep, pray and be protected in public space without discrimination.**
- 2. Right to rest in public spaces and protect oneself from the elements in a non-obstructive manner.**
- 3. Right to occupy a legally parked vehicle.**
- 4. Right to share food and eat in public.**

The Right to Rest model legislation aims to end the criminalization of rest and accompanying violations of basic human and civil rights for all people, regardless of their housing status.

Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) is uniting local social justice organizations by building a movement to expose and eliminate the root causes of civil and human rights abuses of people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Our Right to Rest Campaign is based on our outreach to homeless and poor people in which we documented their experiences with local police and private security. We surveyed 1,388 people in 5 states and 12 cities. The civil rights violations people are experiencing everywhere are very similar. The main “illegal offenses” that homeless people are being harassed & criminalized for include: sleeping (81%), sitting or lying down (78%), and loitering or hanging out (68%).

We can only expect these type of violations of human rights and dignity to get worse as inequality increases, affordable housing shortages remain unaddressed, and more local ordinances are enacted without any protection from state laws.

According to a report from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, titled “The Right to Adequate Housing,” local attempts to deal with homelessness by making homeless people disappear from sight are gross civil and human rights violations. When local governments use “lock 'em up” strategies to criminalize homelessness, homeless people are caught in a long-term cycle of poverty and stigmatization.

All people should be permitted to occupy and utilize public spaces, regardless of their housing status. Furthermore, some civil and human rights that are amply protected for people who have a home have not been defined and applied in a way to equally protect people who do not have a home. The “Right to Rest Act” aims to redress this by protecting this essential right of all people. To ban rest for one of our country’s most vulnerable communities is not only inhumane. It is costly, wasting resources that should be used to secure housing and not on a revolving door of misdemeanor citations and criminal prosecutions.

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For the purposes of our Right to Rest model legislation, a person is “homeless” if they: *lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, have primary nighttime residence in a shelter, on the street, in a vehicle, in an enclosure or structure that is not authorized or fit for human habitation, live doubled-up with friends or family members, live in a transitional housing program, stay anywhere without tenancy rights, or live with one or more children of whom they are the parent or legal guardian in a residential hotel whether or not they have tenancy rights.*

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