Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP)
Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL)

Rebuttal to REMI Partnerships Distortions & Lies

April 2019

www.wraphome.org
Member Organizations

Coalition on Homelessness
San Francisco, CA
www.cohsf.org/en/

Denver Homeless Out Loud
Denver, CO
www.denverhomelessoutloud.org

Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles, CA
www.cangress.org

Right 2 Survive PDX
Portland, OR
www.right2survive.wordpress.com

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
Sacramento, CA
www.sacshoc.org

St. Mary’s Center
Oakland, CA
www.stmaryscenter.org

Sisters Of The Road
Portland, OR
www.sistersoftheroad.org

Street Roots
Portland, OR
www.streetroots.org
IF THEY REALLY CARED, WOULD THEY HAVE FANNED THESE FLAMES?

DEAD HANDS
MASTERS OF IGNORANCE

THE MEDIA

POLITICIANS

WRAP | DHOL | Rebuttal to REMI Partnership’s Distortions & Lies
For the REMI Partnership to claim in their “research” that cities have visible homelessness because they do not sweep houseless people living in public spaces from view is a testament to the true definition of what bias in research stands for. Even the title obfuscates what the report is supposed to be about - “granting unimpeded access to public space” when our measure highlight “in a non obstructive manner” several times. This document is political propaganda cloaked as a report. As we all know – there are no truth in advertising laws in political campaigns.

As you will see the cities mentioned in their report all have long histories and very very active current campaigns involving police, public works, private security and social workers to rid their communities of the reality that thousands of their residents have no housing. In the absence of federal funding for affordable housing since 1983 local governments have used limited shelter allocations, a myriad of new or dusted off vagrancy laws and a constant process of threats, sweeps, property confiscations and arrests to rid their communities of the growing poverty and homelessness in our country – and therefore in our communities.

It is always a “fools errand” to debate a lie, so we do not go through the report point by point – rather we highlight the incredible local work that our member groups are doing to combat the sweeps in the cities highlighted by REMI as having no sweeps at all.

A true research based analysis of this pattern and practice clearly shows anyone looking with an unbiased perspective that sweeps, arrests and property confiscations has never and will never address the housing crisis that is Homelessness in America today.
Cause and Effect

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Criminalization of Homelessness / Poverty

At the heart of our Civil Rights work is outreach to homeless and poor people that documents their experiences with local police and private security. We have recently surveyed 1,657 people in 17 cities throughout 8 states. There can be no denying that “Broken Windows,” “Quality of Life,” “Civil Sidewalks,” 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 campaigns.

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

* 82% for sleeping, with 51% of these people cited and 31% arrested

* 77% for sitting or lying down, with 44% of these people cited and 26% arrested

* 75% for loitering or hanging out, with 43% of these people cited and 26% arrested

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

* 74% No
* 26% Yes
Cleanups of Homeless Camps: Improved Communications and Data Needed

Before cleanup

After cleanup

Underneath SW Jefferson St off-ramp, August 31, 2018

Portland, Oregon Sweeps
The City of Portland increased evictions on properties under its jurisdiction to a peak of 311 in October 2017. By 2018, the number of sweeps is more constant, with an average of 42 campsites swept per week in 2018 (January-November, at the time of writing). According to an estimate from the public campsite reports, the average number of campers involved in a single eviction is 4 residents per site. Using this data, we estimate that every week the City of Portland uproots an average of 168 Portland residents from their homes and communities. This translates into the weekly eviction and dispossession of over 10% of the entire unsheltered homeless population in Portland (Krishnan & Elliot; 10/2017).

In addition to Portland’s OPC eviction rate, the Oregon Department of Transportation has been carrying out its own campsite evictions which are not included in this data, and the City regularly counts dozens of clustered encampments in a park or along a bike trail as a single sweep-eviction. Based on this, we believe the true number of people evicted on a weekly basis is far higher than what we can discern from the data available to us.

Source: https://n2npdx.org/
Police arrests of unhoused Portlanders were up 12% in a June analysis for 2018. Moreover, though houseless residents make up only 3% of the population, they accounted for 52% of all arrests in 2017—19% of which were for criminal trespass (mostly for unauthorized camping), and 42% of which involved procedural violations or warrants for unpaid fines or missed court dates (Woolington, 6/13/2018; Lewis & Woolington, 06/29/2018; Lewis & Woolington, 06/27/2018). Most of the increase in Police calls and costly responses were for ‘unwanted/suspicious' persons or welfare checks, many of those likely the result of anti-homeless calls (Shifley, 03/06/2018).

Source: https://n2npdx.org/
While it is not a crime to be homeless, our city and state have established **224 laws that inhibit those living on the streets from performing necessary life-sustaining activities in the public spaces**, including: erecting a tent, covering possessions with a tarp, sleeping, washing, caring for one's body, or relieving oneself outdoors.
82 most populous cities in California have 820 Anti-homeless Ordinances.

Los Angeles, California Sweeps

Los Angeles Community Action Network

Source: Updated and expanded - June 2016 California’s New Vagrancy Laws The Growing Enactment and Enforcement of Anti-Homeless Laws in the Golden State Policy Advocacy Clinic at the University of California, Berkeley
LA Will Spend $30M This Year On Homeless Sweeps. Do They Even Work?

In the city's most recent approved budget, joint departmental programs conducting encampment sweeps/cleanups received at least $30 million in funding. The year before that, according to the L.A. Times, funding was $13 million.

White's organization. (LA CAN) most recently was party to the suit Mitchell V. Los Angeles, when four homeless residents of Skid Row sued Los Angeles for seizing and destroying their property from the street in Skid Row. They claimed the city violated their 4th and 14th constitutional rights. In March, the Los Angeles City Council voted 10-2 to settle the lawsuit on terms not yet defined or made public.

"We've sued the City of Los Angeles time and time again. And we've won, time and time again. But there's this culture of 'we'll do what we want to do, you'll sue us,' there will be an injunction, 'we'll do what we want to do, you'll sue us,'" said Pete White, who directs the anti-poverty advocates Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN). "But houseless are still houseless. Houseless people in Los Angeles don't live in lawsuits."

Tensions over encampment sweeps, police enforcement, and allegations of constitutional rights violations are nothing new. Since the 1980s, sweeps have been scrutinized in an endless cycle of litigation. Newspaper stories written more than 30 years ago read much like ones written last month.

L.A.M.C. 56.11 is enforced by the Los Angeles Police Department's HOPE teams, one of the two main encampment cleanup programs coordinated through the Unified Homeless Response Center. Also called "Rapid Response," LAPD HOPE conducts "right-of-way" enforcement to break-up sidewalk encampments.

BY MATT TINOCO IN NEWS ON APRIL 10, 2019 6:00 AM
L.A. 30 million dollars a year on Sweeps

- LA spends an estimated 30 million dollars a year cleaning the sidewalks, removing human waste and destroying homeless property that they deem too “bulky”. The city destroyed an estimated 9,000 tents last year. The LAPD’s 4th quarter report shows an increase in the number of tents being destroyed quarter over quarter.

- “Whenever the city’s efforts on this front are criticized, they claim that police and sanitation teams are part of connecting homeless people to services. Unfortunately, LAPD’s own numbers show that these officers are making more arrests and confiscating more tents than they are referring people to services and housing,” said Mike Dickerson.

- On the morning of April 3, 2019, a group of about 50 came together under the banner of the ‘Services Not Sweeps’ campaign, to stand side-by-side with a local homeless encampment on Alvarado St., near the 101 freeway in Echo Park. The group is advocating for more homeless services in place of police enforcement in Los Angeles.

“Unfortunately we are in the displacement business,”

Recently publicized emails between property owners and the LAPD, illustrate the lengths landlords are willing to go to displace the homeless, and the ways in which law enforcement is complicit.

“This issue is too sensitive to discuss over email,” wrote Eddie Guerra, a senior LAPD officer, on August 28, 2018. “Unfortunately we are in the displacement business,” Guerra admits in another email.

The email chain spans several months and also involve property managers, executives at some of the top brokers in Hollywood, and city officials. They illustrate a coordinated effort to displace the homeless and limit services that they think make it easier for them to live on the streets.

LA Taco: https://www.lataco.com/anti-homeless-planters-hollywood/
The duty divide

1 in 6 arrests in Los Angeles is of a houseless person. Houseless people need #MopsNotCops #ToiletsNotTickets #TrashcansNotCrackdowns #ServicesNotSweeps

1 in 3 LAPD use of force “incidents” was against a houseless person. Houseless people need #MopsNotCops #ToiletsNotTickets #TrashcansNotCrackdowns #ServicesNotSweeps
Community Organizations Come Together to Demand “Services Not Sweeps” From Mayor Garcetti

• During National Public Health week, over a dozen community organizations will hold a press conference on Saturday, March 6 calling on the City to remove law enforcement from street and sidewalk cleaning and provide health resources to unhoused communities in public space.

• LOS ANGELES — Over a dozen community organizations have come together to demand Mayor Eric Garcetti make significant changes to how the City approaches unhoused communities in public space. The new campaign, Services Not Sweeps, advocates for providing health-based resources over criminalization during street cleaning.
San Francisco, California Sweep

Coalition on Homelessness
San Francisco

Sanctuary City?

STOP THE SWEEPS!
City's encampment sweeps intensify, even hitting homeless waiting outside Glide Memorial for food

On July 31, homeless people saw their tents and belongings swept from the sidewalk in front of Glide church and across the street, as some waited for a free meal. (Mike Koozmin/S.F. Examiner)

By Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez on August 8, 2018 1:07 am

Trending Articles

$2.2 billion Salesforce Transit Center closes after crack found in steel beam

Debate over rent control measure highlights concern for single family home owners

Tang, Chamber of Commerce blast homeless tax measure at City Hall rally

SFPD Tenderloin · 7/25/18

Tenderloin Homeless Outreach Officers worked with @sfpublicworks today in the TL offering services and making the sidewalks safer for the community we serve.
“Maybe it takes a mayor not running for office to do it, but we need to clean up our streets throughout the city. We haven’t been pushing hard enough. We will now.”

“This is just the beginning.”

SF Mayor Mark Farrell – April 25, 2018

STOP THE SWEEPS
Leading with criminalization if capacity of outreach, shelter, or assistance is lacking.

_Tents/Structures:_ Our goal is no tents or structures in the City. Public Work and SFPD will not clear tents from areas where there is an Encampment Resolution Team effort in progress (currently Merlin, next will likely be 33 Gough). However, Public Works and SFPD can clear areas rapidly when there is not a designated resolution in progress, especially in the encampments we have already cleared (see attached). HSH will assist in these efforts when we have the capacity to do so, if not Public Works and SFPD will still proceed to clear the area. These efforts will be communicated to our HSOC representatives so they can coordinate as needed.

June 15, 2018 email from Jeff Kositsky to Muhammad Nuru, Chief Scott, Jason Elliott, and Naomi Kelly on HSOC Process.

Obtained through Sunshine act Request.
Review HSOC Process

Review HSOC process
HSOC – Extended Hours and Days
  • SFPD has their Special Homeless Officers clearing encampments 6am to 11pm / 7 Days
  • They will be calling to the Radio Room for debris
  • The SFPD Shift Sergeant will call the Swing Supervisor for special needs.
    o We are to respond and assist with their requests
  • The number at HSOC is 415-558-2723

We will have radio room dispatchers at HSOC starting Wednesday, 8/8
  • Call Channel 1 for HSOC assistance
  • 7 days / 7am to 11pm

We need to stay very diligent and proactive in addressing tents
  • Take them down as you see them, and/or coordinate with HotSpot
  • Resolved sites need to stay Tent Free Zones
  • Keep reporting issues with SFPD

Email from Peter Lau, DPW, on HSOC Process to DPW workers (Aug 8, 2018). Obtained through Sunshine Act Request
Note: No mention of HSH, DPH, services, adequate time and notice, or housing/shelter plan for homeless
Marion Bridge Homeless Camp Before and After Police Eviction - Salem
The “after” photos are all that is shown on news media, as is the case in nearly all homeless eviction news coverage.
Thank You!

www.wraphome.org

www.denverhomelessoutloud.org/