

Resolution No.
55th Annual Oregon AFL-CIO State Convention
September 8th-10, 2017
Bend, OR

Humane Solutions for the Unhoused

WHEREAS, the deep pressures of the economic crisis remain unresolved for many working families, especially people and families of color, single head of households, and low-wage working people; and

WHEREAS, violence affects the lives of many houseless and poor people, and for women and LGBTQ youth, domestic violence is a leading cause of houselessness; and

WHEREAS, a housing state of emergency has been declared in several large cities, Los Angeles CA, Seattle WA, and Portland OR, on the West coast of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a long history of using malicious and discriminatory laws to keep particular people out of public spaces and the public consciousness; and

WHEREAS, with Jim Crow, Ugly Laws, Anti-Okie Laws, Operation Wetback and Sundown Towns, people were charged with criminal behavior on the basis of their racial, economic, social, immigration or disability status; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Justice statement of interest that argues that making it a crime for people who are homeless to sleep in public places, when there is insufficient shelter space in a city, unconstitutionally punishes them for being homeless¹; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Rhode Island passed the nation's first statewide Homeless Bill of Rights, which will allow them to prioritize solutions that are more humane, less

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-files-brief-address-criminalization-homelessness>

expensive and more successful in reducing the impact of homelessness on communities and individuals; and

WHEREAS, Oregon has no unified state law that defines a statewide standard protecting basic civil rights of our most vulnerable Oregonians and guaranteeing that they have adequate counsel when charged with a crime for existing in a public space; and

WHEREAS, Oregon state legislature has considered, but hasn't passed the "Right to Rest Act AKA Homeless Bill of Rights" in the Oregon 2015, 2016, 2017 sessions that seeks to stop this growing injustice in our state and identify more sustainable and humane responses to homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the proposed state law also resolves to reduce the impact of homelessness on communities and individuals by diverting investment from criminalization to stabilization efforts; and

WHEREAS, Western Regional Advocacy Project², has been leading the legislative reform efforts to bring full civil rights to unhoused people in Oregon, California, and Colorado; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Oregon AFL-CIO supports "The Right to Rest Act/Oregon Homeless Bill of Rights" which would protect people without homes from violations of their basic human rights and the people who serve them from penalties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Right 2 Rest Act be added to our legislative priorities list for the 2018 Oregon short session and if unsuccessful the 2019 Oregon long session of congress; and

² <http://wraphome.org/>

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, Oregon AFL-CIO shall give its endorsement to the Western Regional Advocacy Project,³ to be listed as a supporter in campaign materials.

³ <http://wraphome.org/what/homeless-bill-of-rights/oregon-r2r/>