



Resolution #19-08

RESOLUTION CALLING ON SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY CITIES TO STOP CRIMINALIZING HOMELESSNESS AND SETTLE *HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT ORANGE COUNTY V. COUNTY OF ORANGE*

WHEREAS, the *Martin v. City of Boise* decision finds it unconstitutional to criminalize homelessness by either issuing or threatening to issue camping citations to people experiencing homelessness when they do not have access to adequate shelter. The enforcement of camping ordinances traps homeless people in a cycle of poverty by consuming their time and resources in defending criminal actions; can eliminate eligibility for government programs and harm current or future employment; often results in the loss of property and pets upon arrest; disproportionately affects minorities; and increases mortality rates by punishing the act sleeping. (See Bidish Sharma & Jessica Brand, “The Criminalization of Homelessness: Explained,” *The Appeal*, Jun. 29, 2018, <https://theappeal.org/the-criminalization-of-homelessness-an-explainer-aa074d25688d/>.);

WHEREAS, north Orange County cities have settled the *Orange County Catholic Worker v. County of Orange* lawsuit, relating to the criminalization of homelessness, and opened new emergency shelters, but south Orange County cities have continued to expend resources litigating the related homelessness lawsuit, *Housing is a Human Right Orange County v. County of Orange*;

WHEREAS, almost 7,000 homeless individuals were counted across Orange County in 2019, and aside from the Friendship Shelter and Alternate Sleep Location in Laguna Beach, not a single low-threshold emergency shelter exists anywhere in south Orange County (south of Costa Mesa);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Orange County calls on local leaders of south Orange County cities to (1) conduct public outreach similar to recent community engagement by Costa Mesa leaders in order to educate residents and businesses about the costly consequences of not following the law, including an injunction allowing for camping in any public area; and (2) settle the *Housing is a Human Right Orange County v. County of Orange* lawsuit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Orange County strongly condemns the criminalization of homelessness, stands with the most vulnerable members of the local community, and calls for an immediate end to violations of their human and civil rights.

Submitted by Jeff Letourneau, Jaci Lynn, and Mohammed Aly

**Adopted by the Democratic Party of Orange County
At its ___ Central Committee Meeting**