

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1925

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 25, 2021 8:00 AM

Tycelin Champagne

Self, Outreach Specialist

AUSTIN, TX

I am writing to APPOSE HB 1925. As a Texan and Austin Resident I have had the honor to work with those experiencing homelessness for many years. I have built relationships with these individuals, heard their stories, and together with them have worked to end stigma and to assist in bridging services that so many of us take for granted such as medical care, food to eat, employment etc... People do not want to live in fear that they will face punitive action for merely existing in a world which is not easily accessible. Applying another legal barrier doesn't solve the issue of homelessness, it creates another barrier to a long list of obstacles which one comes up against while homeless. This bill is unfair and unjust and simply NOT HELPFUL. I urge you all to oppose this bill and to instead focus on contributing factors of an individual's circumstances. Thank you.

Mark White

self

Houston, TX

I support this bill! The single most damaging affect on Texas communities, quality of life, safety, and sanitation over the past decade has been the issue of illegal camping, especially with cities. Despite the myriad of services available to people in need, there has developed a tacit approval of illegal camping as an absurd substitute to social services which actually improve the life of people in need. HOWEVER, to compliment this bill there MUST be an improvement in the accessibility of mental health services including substance abuse. Perhaps a consequence for repeat offenders can be an evaluation for mental health needs and referrals to state services in lieu of incarceration or fines.

Joyce Statz

self

AUSTIN, TX

Without providing some other remedy, making camping a criminal offense it unjustifiable. By and large, the homeless are not on the street because they choose to be there; they are on the street because of job losses, family breakdowns, medical catastrophes, and a host of other reasons.

Please do not put this bill forward. It is inhumane. It puts a heavy burden on governments throughout the state who don't have the resources to safely provide for those who are criminalized by this bill.

Kellie Stiewert

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925! Unhoused community members do not need to be faced with ticket fines, criminal charges, or an increased housing insecurity. This will do nothing to solve the problem but push people out to areas that are less liveable. Please do not pass HB 1925!

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anna ingram

Self

Wylie, TX

AGAINST. This is absolutely unacceptable to punish those the government ignores anyway. The government provides little to no help to those who are homeless, including the focus on free mental health support which is the cause of most homelessness cases. Now this bill brings up the point of PUNISHING those who are helpless and alone to begin with. Let them sleep.. or so called "camp" in public. Instead of ignoring them, help them or support them. Unacceptable to punish those with fines or jail time when our prisons are ALREADY too full and they cannot afford fees. Where will they go? Will you welcome them into their home to get them off the streets?

Deirdre Earls, 30 year resident of Austin

Myself and my tenants

Austin, TX

Please help. Since City of Austin rescinded its public camping ban crime on people, cars and homes have become a daily norm, and I see homeless people everywhere in the neighborhood urinating on restaurants, too. In the alley behind my home I can no longer park there because the constant stench of human urine is nauseating and a public health hazard. I am worried for my tenants , for their health and safety. Please, please ban public camping on public property in Texas.

emily miller

self

Austin, TX

Camping should not be a public offense until we are able to offer more affordable, accessible and permanent housing for all.

Emily Johnston

Self

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Nicole Mann

Self. Teacher.

Austin, TX

Dear fellow Texan,

I am concerned for the well-being of my unhoused neighbors and how this bill will further the hardships these community members face daily. It is NOT a criminal offense to have nowhere to go nor should it be a criminal offense to make a temporary

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home on our public lands. Additionally, any actions that criminalize this hardship will add to the difficulty these community members face to improve their living situation.

Please use your power, influence, and my tax dollars to HELP our unhoused neighbors rather than HURT them!

Thank you for your consideration in OPPOSING HB 1925!

Regards,
Nicole Mann and family

Mollie Lund

N/A

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925.

My name is Mollie Lund and I am a Texas concerned about homelessness.

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in the State Affairs on Thursday.

This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go, nowhere to call home. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, with warrants that prevent them from getting their ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt chance of getting employment and housing and will keep more individuals and families homeless for longer.

As an individual who experienced homelessness as a teenager because I was raised by a single mother, this is personal. I can't begin to explain to you what this bill would have done to my family and my future. My mom was able to live in her car legally and was not ticketed, not arrested, and was able to quickly be re-housed because she did not have an arrest record, warrants for her arrest and was able to find employment because of those things. THESE THINGS MATTER. Camping bans and Car Camping bans impose a huge threat to our unhoused neighbors.

HB 1925 would criminalize being homeless, perpetuate the homelessness/criminal justice system cycle, and make it much hard for persons experiencing homelessness to access services. It also preempts local control, requiring cities and counties to obtain state permission to allow camping even on property owned or controlled by the city/county. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

Gregory Bosley

self, university staff

Austin, TX

Laws that make it a crime for the homeless to engage in life-sustaining activities are cruel. Many of these laws punish people for sitting and sleeping outside or asking for help. They punish people, in other words, for trying to survive.

These laws also make the underlying problems that cause homelessness worse. People rack up fines and fees that they cannot pay. They are saddled with criminal records, making it more difficult to get housing and employment. When individuals are jailed, they often lose access to public benefits and shelter space. For those with medical or treatment needs, continuity of care is disrupted. Any possessions these individuals have managed to obtain are lost forever. All of these effects perpetuate the cycle of homelessness. As the cost of living skyrockets in our cities, more people find themselves without housing. Additionally, this bill would cost millions of dollars on police, jails and courts. That money could be better invested in interventions to prevent homelessness or assist those experiencing it to find shelter, an income, and necessary community services. If we want to end homelessness, that's where we must put our money.

Anna Beth Burniston

Self, developmental psychology researcher

Kerrville, TX

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I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 1925. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing, and actually keep more people homeless longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today. And it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt. budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Sophie Mesches

Self

Fort Worth, TX

This is not only classist and unethical but truly solves nothing. If you begin criminalizing homelessness, what is your plan for when they are incarcerated? Or possibly after they get released and the cycle continues? This is also truly a bill for those who care more about looks and materialistic things than other people's well-being, and it is disgustingly transparent. Shame on all of the people that created this and are going to support this. If you care more about how our city looks to tourists or people who live downtown and are headed to go get drinks with friends, then shame on you. This is heartless and anyone who supports this will truly be on the wrong side of history regarding houseless Americans.

Katherine Chworowsky

Self, graduate researcher

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill which is cruel to our unhoused neighbors. This bill punishes people for being unhoused and saddles them with unnecessary fines. This bill does little to address the underlying problems and seeks to push aside the homeless population instead of proposing a logical solution to the homelessness crisis. If you care about reducing the homelessness population and the humanity of those who experience homelessness, this bill is inhumane and will serve little much than to punish those who have little to blame for this crisis.

Therese Paoletta

Self, graduate student

Austin, TX

This bill is cruel and non grounded in any logic. Forcing those without homes into even more dangerous situations without solving the root cause is irresponsible and inhumane. The homeless haven't increased crime in Austin, and we are in the middle of a economic recession and coming out of a pandemic. This bill is so pointless.

Dora Smith

Self, warehouse

Austin, TX

I am speaking in opposition to House Bill 1925, to ban public camping and create a criminal offense.

Until last spring I favored such an idea.

The problem is the growing good reasons why good people are homeless, and the lack of alternative choices.

First, the major recession has left a lot of people without the means to support themselves through no fault of their own.

Second, many good working people in Austin, where I live, cannot afford housing. Rents start at \$600 plus utilities to share

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housing; it cannot be done on \$7.50 an hour.

Third, there is a very small amount of low income housing available. “Affordable housing” efforts are wrongly aimed at people making \$30,000 a year.

One can clearly see that who lives in tents is changing. Near where I live in Austin, instead of bums in cardboard housing surrounded by piles of trash, which was typical two years ago, one sees growing numbers of tent communities that are neat and well kept, with clean, self respecting, well organized seeming people going in and out of them for instance carrying baskets of laundry.

Help to people struggling to afford housing is only available in Austin to limited numbers of problem people who have been homeless for years.

Giving decent struggling people criminal records for doing nothing wrong just creates obstacles to both employment and housing.

Finally, shelters aren't a decent alternative to sleeping on the street. During snowmegaddon, my uninsulated 1970s apartment building had no electricity and no heat for five days. Rather than put normal people with no heat in shelters opened for the disaster, the City of Austin crammed us into extra shelters for “our neighbors experiencing homelessness”. I stayed in two of them.

It was an adventure. We were fed poor quality food when someone happened to get to it, often like 2 PM and 7 PM. One day we had just one meal. I was suddenly told at 7:30 PM lights out was at 8 PM. We weren't allowed to shower at one place and there were no showers at the other. People got into fights. Every single night, people lay in bed shouting and screaming all night. One night, I had a migraine headache, but we weren't allowed to leave to go buy aspirin. Instead I was told I had to call EMS. EMS is clearly used to this. They came over icy roads, handed me aspirin, checked my blood pressure, which was uncharacteristically 160 over 95, and left. Then I presume they billed the county for the call. When I got home after 5 days, the water wasn't on, so my brother took me to his house to shower and do laundry. I climbed the stairs, ran for the toilet, and was violently sick out of both ends at once. I must have caught norovirus.

The homeless argue that they feel afraid for their lives in these shelters. They sure aren't places anyone can be expected to stay.

Kate Mesches

Myself

Austin, TX

As a Texan, I oppose HB 1925 because it is inhuman. Making it illegal to sleep in public is not the way to solve homelessness. It will also put an undue burden on Texans already suffering by imposing fines, making arrests and bringing charges that they cannot pay and would hurt that individual's chance to apply for/gain employment. Create legislation that increases funding for; mental health and addiction treatment, job training, shelters & temporary housing, free community college & vocational education, access to healthcare, debt forgiveness, rent abatement, When people are struggling - you don't take away from them - you give to them. Texans take care of their own.

Elizabeth Doenges

Concerned citizen who has a heart

Austin, TX

These are human beings you're targeting. This in no way addresses the homelessness issue in way that is even remotely humane. How do you suggest our neighbors attain gainful employment with a criminal charge? It's hardly criminal not to have any place to go but the street. How is that a crime? Or is it just something you don't want to have to look at? Having a job and a roof over your head doesn't make you any less culpable for the way you treat the less fortunate. If anything it should make you more so. I object to HB 1925! We are better than this.

Beverly Lazar

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Austin Justice Coalition, Grassroots Leadership, Homes not Handcuffs

Austin, TX

Hi. I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness, and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere to go. Also, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folk's chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the fate of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration. Beverly Lazar

Geena Spigarelli

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly punish people who have nowhere else to go. Plus by saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

TERRY TODD, MS.

SELF- PRECINCT CHAIR 109.

OVILLA, TX

NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CAMP ON UNDESIGNATED PUBLIC PROPERTY.

Sue Gabriel

Homes Not Handcuffs

Austin, TX

Please vote against HB 1925. Homelessness is punishing to those who experience it, not just from the inherent and protracted trauma of living exposed in the streets, but also due to the widespread and pervasive laws that punish people for being homeless. HB 1925 will be violating the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The State of Texas should be working to stop the growing homelessness problems that are due to gentrification, growing gap incomes, higher costs of living. etc.

Chloe Morris

Self - LMT

Leander, TX

Adamantly oppose this bill. This bill criminalizes homelessness and will hurt unhoused Texans.

Brian Wheat

self - software engineer

Austin, TX

This bill is attempting to criminalize people experiencing homelessness. This is not only a cost inefficient way to house individuals, but also incredibly inhumane.

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Jenny Thomas

Self

Austin, TX

I highly oppose this bill and ask for you to vote no on this thank you

Elizabeth Santiago, Dr.

Self (Data Scientist)

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. The solution to homelessness is not criminalizing the existence of homeless people. It is to provide housing. This bill would harm our unhoused neighbors. Please do not pass it.

Lulu Manco-Stenz

Self, High School Student

Austin, TX

I live in Austin, Texas and I strongly opposed this bill. The homeless people who live on the streets of Austin are important parts of the community. Helping them is one of my top priorities. I strongly believe that the Texas Government should be working to help unhoused individuals, but HB 1925 does the exact opposite by criminalizing camping in public places. This will punish unhoused people who have nowhere else to go with tickets. Those who are unhoused do not have the funds to pay these costs, and when they can't pay them, they would be arrested. A criminal record would prevent them from getting a job, prolonging their homelessness. I strongly oppose this bill and any person who cares about reducing homelessness in Texas should oppose it as well.

Jordyn Middlebrooks

Sunrise Movement

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925. Criminalizing sleeping or camping in a public place not only creates additional harm for low income communities and home insecure populations and is a complete waste of tax payer money. It is economical to provide permanent housing which is a lower cost than using taxpayer funds to put those without sheltered in prison for no legitimate reason other than that they do not have the means to provide shelter for themselves. This bill is inherently and intently harmful, and I ask you to not move forward with it. People's health and equity is more important than the aesthetics of a street.

Jules Allien

Self, Full Time College Student

Cypress, TX

This bill banning public sleeping will aid in the further disenfranchisement of our homeless population. These people, many who are veterans and mentally ill, are already suffering from lack of basic needs of life. Why propose a bill that would kick them while they're down? These people will not be able to pay the fines incurred by their living situation. I know that I, as well as many other Texans, would much prefer to see our homeless population revolve help from the government, not a penalty for their situation which can very well be out of their control. Especially during our current pandemic, so many people are suffering from homeless and this bill will do nothing to help the people of Texas. I urge the house not to pass this bill and to side with the people of Texas that they have been appointed to office to represent. Thank you for your consideration.

Sargun Singh

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self, student

Cypress, TX

I do not support this bill and the criminalization of our unhoused communities. This bill would not increase the safety of our communities and does not address the needs of the unhoused.

Victoria Collier

self

Austin, TX

This is a disgusting law that only wanna make life even harder for a percentage of austin's population that struggles the most. This law will do absolutely nothing to help these ppl with no where to go and is yet another example of the Texas government not giving a damn about the people who live in Texas. This law is not only classist, but is also racist with the majority of homeless people in Texas being people of color, with that population growing due to the ice storm and the mass gentrification of low income areas. This law should not pass and instead the government should be doing they're ACTUAL job for once and find ppl without homes places to stay and help them get back on their feet. Being homeless is not a choice nor should it be considered a crime.

Jahna Douglas

Self

Austin, TX

A person who doesn't have a home isn't a criminal. They are poor and need assistance. This Bill is unethical and cruel.

Ann Huttenhower

Self

Austin, TX

This bill is disgusting, as a born and raised Texas I vehemently oppose it. The very last place people without homes need to go is jail simply for not having a home. It would be an absolutely waste of tax money and definitely inhumane to hold these people in jail and try them criminally for not having a home, which is usually a situation outside of their control. Disgusting. Why don't you criminally try and jail the officers who shot that student in the head with a rubber bullet.

Natalie Weston

CD Doyle Clinic, Medical Student

Austin, TX

I am a medical student who is currently training in the city of Austin, and a lot of my time involves caring for people experiencing homelessness. Every day I see the incredible hardships these people face, and I cannot believe anyone would be cruel enough to make their fulfilling a basic need of SLEEP a criminal offense. Criminalizing sleeping in public doesn't help address any of these people's needs, and will lead to a waste of resources of police officers driving around and arresting these people and giving them fines and/or jail time. These funds and city officials should be used to help individuals experiencing homelessness get their basic needs of food, water, and shelter. If HB 1925 passes not only will it be an incredible waste of state time and money but will also make it more difficult for homeless people to move on to a better situation. They will either have to put whatever money they do have to pay fines and not use it for other needs, or they will end up in jail for not being able to pay fines and then have an even harder time finding future employment because of a criminal record. This bill is inhumane and the complete antithesis of what being a Texan is all about. OPPOSE.

Cristina Coupal

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Self

Austin, TX

This bill is an enshrinement of denial and disgust over the the actual problems, which the bill ignores. These are: Texas' devastating lack of affordable housing (including for individuals living on SSI wages of \$794/month), inadequate mental health resources, and exuberance for the meaningless criminalization of already vulnerable individuals. Nothing is achieved by criminalizing somebody who has no other option than to sleep on the sidewalk. It just creates a perpetual cycle of streets, jail, streets - all of which take people further away from the possibility of stable housing. This bill amplifies the deadly hatred that privileged members of our society direct toward the most vulnerable - the lives of those who sleep on the streets are shorter because their needs are ignored, and harder because they are targeted by powerful people such as yourselves. Though irrational fears are regularly expressed against homelessness, there is nothing more evident than the disgust that many privileged Texans feel for the exposed circumstances of people living on the streets and under highways. Call it what it is- the bill expresses the willful ignorance of its supporters in denying the housing crisis that all Texans are suffering from. Slapping criminal charges on the people most impacted accomplishes Nothing but further insult and injury. Propose a law that does something for Texans who need housing, not Texans who turn their nose up at their neighbors.

John-Michael Reed

self - teacher

Austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to this bill.

No only does this criminal homeless without offering support for for Texas living in a desperate position, it burdens small communities who have limited resources.

People need support, not fines.

Jacob Slaughter

Austin DSA

austin, TX

I am strongly against HB 1925. Our homeless neighbors need homes, not more criminalization and demonization from the State Lege. Housing is a human right, and this bill is directly opposed to this notion.

Kellen Gildersleeve, RN

Self, Registered Nurse

Austin, TX

This bill is not good for Texas. We need to have sufficient places for people without housing to live before we make it illegal to camp in public. It is not safe for public health that, during an ongoing pandemic, we are looking to incarcerate more people into crowded detention centers for something they do not have an option to avoid. It will cost our state more money to prosecute and incarcerate these citizens rather than simply housing them.

Banning public camping will just make our unhoused neighbors go into hiding, staying further from the places where they may be able to find work and begin to turn things around. It will make it harder for emergency services to find them and help them if they are in need. It will impose fines upon them that they clearly cannot pay.

What does this bill achieve except to state loud and clear that the state of Texas doesn't want to help these people, but simply wishes for them to disappear or die? So many Texans are one disaster away, one lost paycheck away from losing their housing. Please consider the compassionate and moral route and reject this bill.

Donika Toncheva

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Self

Austin, TX

I'm a Texan, and while I'm very concerned about the state's homelessness, this isn't the bill to resolve it. This is a cruel bill that only punishes people for having nowhere else to go and doesn't offer long term solutions for our homeless population. These are real people who are in need of help to get back on their feet. This bill also saddles these homeless individuals with fines they're unable to pay, warrants that prevent them from getting an ID, and Arrests that only give them criminal records. Our goal should be to help rehabilitate these individuals as functioning members of society - this bill will only encase them in their current situation and lock them out of opportunities for improvement. I strongly oppose this bill and encourage the assembly to submit a new, more humane and thoughtful bill that truly considers long term solutions for our homeless population.

Joelle Hitz

Self, nanny

Austin, TX

The homeless population of austin should ABSOLUTELY NOT be criminalized in any way. They posses no intent for harm to our communities and are only trying to exist in a country and city that doesn't care about them or aid them in any way. This bill poses the exact opposite of what these people need most and I urge the city to seek solutions to aid these people so they can give back to the city in productive and appreciative ways, instead of becoming further victims of the system.

Mary Coppinger

Self Retired

Austin, TX

We must find a way to provide housing to the homeless. Making public camping a criminal event, is cruel punishment for those who have been unable to find housing. Many of the homeless have either mental or physical health problems. They need medical help. At the moment it is very complicated to get a caseworker and there is a very long wait for subsidized housing. I have known homeless pregnant women, people with mental health problems and a lady in a wheelchair with multiple health issues that prevent her from working. What purpose would it serve to call these people criminals? They are all good people who have already suffered dreadful privations because they were unable to earn a living wage, please, do not call these unfortunate individuals criminals. Instead, offer them a way out of their dilemma.

Caelan Navarrete

Self, Barista

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on this Thursday's agenda in state affairs. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that would give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and keep them homeless for much longer. Also, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today in order to avoid the threat of losing state grant funds, which would hurt local governments. If you care at all about reducing homelessness, local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you will swiftly oppose this bill.

Cara Tesnow

Self-Human

Smithville, TX

What are you doing? Who are you protecting by not protecting others who can't for themselves? Other countries and other

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STATES in OUR country that have taken action by helping this community. Places are actively trying to lift people up. Just try.

Aleksandra Guerra

Self, Mental Health Social Worker

Frisco, TX

This piece of legislation is blatantly discriminatory toward people experiencing homelessness or crisis in our state. Especially with the impact of COVID-19, which has caused many people to lose homes due to financial crisis, more and more people are in need of community support for housing, not prosecution! We don't even have enough shelter space in this state to accommodate our homeless population. Many people sleep in public because they have no other choice, or because they don't feel safe elsewhere. To criminalize people for sleeping in public is most widely going to affect those experiencing chronic or acute homelessness. Our homeless populations are not the enemy and if our communities worked together to get to know them better and to work towards solutions, they wouldn't be so concerned about having them visible in our community. Banning people sleeping in public is an effort toward "hiding the dirty laundry" for the sake of making a community and businesses look "nice." It is a farce. If we can't face the reality of poverty in our communities, who are we?

John Ridenour

self, caregiver

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill vehemently. What this bill proposes, if enacted, would force people experiencing homelessness into even less safe situations - out of sight, out of mind, no problem, right? WRONG. Punishing people for having nowhere to go is cruel and pointless. It perpetuates the problem instead offering people the possibility of housing, healthcare, employment, and education. I thought Republicans were the party of small, limited government. If that is so, why are y'all constantly trying to control everyone with manufactured outrage, fear, and authoritarianism? This is not a criminal problem - it is a humanitarian crisis brought about by the policies of conservatives. Y'all need to get out of the way and stop being evil.

rebecca goebel

Self and my household

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan very concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Suzanne Elizondo

self

Austin, TX

I am a lifelong Texan and am writing to strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. It would hurt unhoused people's chances of getting employment and housing by saddling them with tickets they can't afford to pay, issuing warrants that prevent them from getting an ID and arrests that give them criminal records, further attributing to their homelessness for longer.

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I care about reducing homelessness, as well as the humanity of unhoused people and how they should be treated. Oppose this bill.

Adam hartmann

Self- teacher

Round rock, TX

Do not allow this awful bill to pass. It's inhuman right and cannot be correctly enforced.

Christina Hughes

Self - graduate student

Killeen, TX

Hi, I am a Texas resident who strongly opposes HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs this Thursday. Our unhoused neighbors do not deserve to be criminalized by the institutions slated to serve their interests simply because they have nowhere else to go. Texas does an insufficient job in supporting our unhoused neighbors but by saddling them with tickets they can't pay you further increase their crisis situation, making it more difficult for them to find avenues out of their current situations. This bill would also create an enormous unfunded mandate on smaller communities who currently have no bans in place. The threat of losing state grant funds hurts communities and if you care about all Texans you can't reasonably support this bill. I implore you to consider the impact this bill would have on those most vulnerable already. Do not support this bill. Support Texans.

ray salazar

self, sales associate

san antonio, TX

i hope you all oppose hb 1925. hb 1925 will do more harm than good. make it make sense. help people to help themselves, do not make things worse by criminalizing people who have not committed any crime.

AMANDA MILLION

Self

Austin, TX

This proposal is absolutely DISGUSTING. The focus should be on helping people get off the streets, not making their lives worse by criminalizing them for living. The absolute lack of empathy and care behind this proposal makes me sick. This bill should not be passed and those proposing it should be ashamed of themselves.

Joanne Xu

Self

Austin, TX

As a resident of Austin, I oppose this bill. Creating solutions around housing security and the currently unhoused is critical in a city like ours, but this is not the way. This is not a solution — by no exaggeration, it's a death sentence. I think the City of Austin knows this, and I challenge our governing bodies to do the real work of governance and propose long-term change that protects our most vulnerable. Not leaves them out to dry. I oppose HB 1925.

Rachel Mitrano

Self

Austin, TX

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Hi I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would unjustly punish those with no where else to go. Plus by giving them tickets they can't afford, warrants that prevent them from getting IDs and arrests that give them criminal records, you are hurting their chances of employment and effectively keeping them on the streets for longer. Plus, requiring small to mid size towns without this ban now to enforce it or lose state funding would create a huge unfunded mandate and destroy local governments. If you care about suburban and rural local governments, reducing homelessness and the humanity of unhoused people, please oppose this bill.

Emma Schmidt

Self

Austin, TX

I am against the bill and believe it hurts the chances of anyone currently homeless to find work or housing by labeling them a criminal by the current state of their existence. Please do not pass this bill and move instead to provide housing and opportunity to our house less neighbors rather than punishment.

Audrey Lin

Self, student

Waco, TX

Hello, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness, and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by burdening unhoused people with tickets they most likely cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing, and would actually keep more people homeless, longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't currently have public sleeping bans, and would force the unfunded mandate though the threat of losing state grant funds and therefore hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

brooke jones, Miss

Myself

Austin, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday.

This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments.

If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local gov't budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Brittany Hoang

Self

Austin, TX

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This is unfair,, if you so want to keep people from camping in public places, why don't you find those that need it and give them a home? How would you feel if you were in this position because you don't have the privilege and money to have a stable household to be told your a criminal because you're trying to make a living? If you care so much about changing laws and making a change, how about taking money and putting it towards causes that need it instead of wasting it on other unnecessary things. You can't call people criminals because they are trying to make a living in this tiring country that doesn't want to benefit them.

Claire Carter

self student

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having no where else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and midsize communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

stella bolin

self

austin, TX

this bill can not pass we need to protect our un houses community and help them have hopes of getting a better life rather than leaving them out on the streets to be more vulnerable. this has already proved counterproductive in deacresing the un housed population in austin. we need to take steps twords getting these people off of the streets if we want to make any progress. being homeless and trying to find some where to sleep especially when this city provides them with no where else to go should not be a crime. people should not be criminalized for being un housed.

Jillian Vazquez

Self

Austin, TX

If passed, it will be an inhumane and illogical response to homelessness. We must address the core issues and provide rehabilitation and respectable shelter before enacting a law this extreme, which will surely lead to mass suffering and even death.

Rachel Weil

self

Austin, TX

Do not criminalize homelessness. Do not criminalize homelessness. Do not criminalize homelessness.

Kelsey Spencer

Self

Austin, TX

I worked downtown for over 6 years. I walked to work from the East side, where there was parking, to my 6th street workplace just on the other side of probably our most infamous I-35 overpass every single day. I currently live just North of the Mueller development. I'm no stranger to high populations of homeless people being "in my backyard" like the Save Austin Now PAC supporters like to threaten, as if it's a "gotcha".

This bill and the aggressive restrictions it intends to enforce is cruelty, plain and simple. Aside from the morality at play, the end result will mean so much more money wasted on cycling our homeless population in and out of our slow, inefficient justice system. A fraction of that money could be spent on providing the assistance they sorely need. Piling on the charges only makes it exponentially harder for someone to dig themselves out of homelessness, particularly when the resources at their disposal are so blatantly lacking.

Put the focus where it makes a difference. As a native Austinite who has lived in this city for over 30 years, I strongly oppose this bill and will do everything in my power to get it voted down. I encourage the House to do the same.

Kyle Artrip

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill and the danger it subjects our already at risk homeless population to. Passing this bill will further displace people already displaced by the city's rising cost of living despite many of the aforementioned having lived in Austin all their lives, and many victims of only recent evictions.

Emily Gray

Self

Austin, TX

Vote no on criminalizing homeless. Does nothing to house folks, only pushes them out of eyesight and makes their lives harder. Do you think getting housing or a job is easy with a criminal record? 90% of folks don't show up for their court date because being unhinged requires different priorities. These tickets don't raise money for the community or housing. What a waste.

Carly Zuniga

Austin, tx

Austin, TX

It is truly disgusting to see my Texas legislature attempting to criminalize vulnerable people who at best are likely victims of a global crisis and at worst have experienced some form of tragedy or illness. I've watched the homeless population grow around me in my central Austin neighborhood for the last year, and I know it to be a direct result of the governor's and Texas legislators' indifference to the well being of their constituents. Last year when the pandemic took hold in March, my neighbors and myself lost our jobs. Many companies and businesses chose to fire their employees as opposed to laying them off. Are y'all aware that you cannot file for unemployment EVEN DURING A CRISIS if you have been fired? What do you think people did when they couldn't acquire unemployment funds or find jobs when the job market dried up due to lockdown? Without a moratorium on evictions and a working system for applying for Texas unemployment, people lost their homes, and now my own state's legislature intends to further destroy the lives of individuals who they have actively put in this situation by their indifference and inaction. This is all besides the fact that I'm sure none of our legislators have themselves experienced financial insecurity. It is disgusting to even consider a bill that would criminalize the most vulnerable population in our state solely for the comfort of privileged Texans. As a Texan who cares and worries for my homeless neighbors, I urge you not to pass this bill as it is a despicable display of hatred for vulnerable individuals from our leaders.

Hillary Geisler

Self

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Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. We can find a more humane solution for our homeless neighbors.

Laura Archambault

Self, departmental research administrator

Austin, TX

Passing this bill unfairly discriminates against unhoused individuals. With the economic crisis during 2020 that has resulted in many individuals losing their housing this is not the time to criminalize this activity. Furthermore, this would overwhelm our criminal justice system, increase these individuals chance of catching COVID-19 which would impact our hospitals and continue to disproportionately impact our communities of color. Please focus on bringing forward legislation that would help cities create stronger support networks for their unhoused residents , such as access to mental health treatment, housing grants, career support, support for recently unhoused individuals, and more. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Grace Drescher

Self

Austin, TX

Please oppose HB 1925!

Elizabeth Contreras

self- student.

Austin, TX

Criminalizing houselessness does absolutely nothing to solve the issues causing people to sleep on the streets. Rather than wasting time with legislation that persecutes our houseless neighbors, the state legislature should focus on improving social services that could keep people off the street. If anything, this legislation would only crowd our already overcrowded prisons, placing more of a burden on taxpaying Texans. The place for people facing houselessness is not prison. We could direct the money spent to keep people in prison towards housing and healing.

Hannah N

Self - social worker

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texan who is deeply disturbed and in opposition of HB 1925 which is on the agenda in state affairs for this Thursday. This bill is not the answer to supporting our unhoused community and working towards an ethical, healthy, and truly supportive solution to end homelessness. This bill would criminalize and punish folks who may not have alternate ways to be housed. It would also burden these folks with tickets they may be unable to pay, create criminal charges against them, seriously impact their mental health and ultimately make it even more challenging for them to seek and obtain employment, housing, or stability.

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If you care about reducing homelessness, if you care about the humanity and well-being (physical and mental) of unhoused folks, and if you care about reducing suburban and rural government budgets, you will oppose this bill.

Caitlin Tibbetts

Self, student

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925 because just saying that someone can't sleep outside doesn't mean that they will suddenly have a home to go back to. The only thing that the government can do to fight homelessness is find and provide homes to people that need them. Criminalizing an already traumatic situation does absolutely nothing to fix the root problem. It is clear that HB 1925 is only aimed at creating a reason to imprison these people to get them off the streets for aesthetic reasons with no regard for the actual lives being uprooted. We, as a community, need to care enough about our unhoused people to not needlessly make criminals out of them, and, in the future, we need to help them find homes.

Anna Hall

N/A

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in the state affairs on 03/25. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting an ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folk's chances of getting employment and housing, and actually keep more people homeless longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

McKenzie Olson

Self

Dallas, TX

My name is McKenzie Olson and I live in Dallas County. I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose Tx HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting TX IDs, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and stable housing. This bill will greatly contribute to the cycle of poverty many houseless people and people forced out of their homes after losing their jobs during a GLOBAL PANDEMIC are trapped in.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today. It would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Mary McFadden

Self

Austin, TX

Criminalizing homelessness will do nothing to solve the homeless problem in Texas. No one gets evicted from their home and says "Oh no, it's illegal to sleep on the street and the shelters are full. I guess I'll just buy myself a new house!" Seriously. Don't vote this in. It would be a giant step backwards if this is implemented in Texas.

Nathan Fernandes
Self/Health worker
Austin, TX

I strongly opposed HB 1925 that would cruelly punish people that have nowhere else to go and does nothing to stop homelessness. And would hurt local cities trying to help their most vulnerable citizens

Camille Sico
Self Civil Engineer
Austin, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, this bill would hurt unhoused folks' chances of getting employment and housing by saddling them with tickets that they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them a criminal record. This will actually make it much more difficult for people to escape homelessness and it will keep more people homeless for longer. This bill will not accomplish anything positive.

Additionally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans currently and would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds which would hurt local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

Danielle Pedersen
Self
Round Rock, TX

As a resident of Texas, I feel like this Bill will hurt and devastate our most vulnerable citizens. We need more resources made available to help our unhoused neighbors. They need our support. Criminal penalties will only continue to keep them in the cycle of homeless and poverty.

This Bill not only harms these citizens but also the towns that would be needed to enforce this oppressive law.

Maureen Ryan
Self- Instructor
Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. Criminalizing homelessness is not the answer.

Kacie Galloway
Self, Analyst/Content Editor
Carrollton, TX

I do not support HB 1925 as it will harm and criminalize unhoused Texans and place an undue burden on public servants to enforce the mandate. Please do not support this bill.

Eliana Ruben
the people
Austin, TX

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Hello, as a Texan concerned about homelessness, I STRONGLY oppose bill HB 1925. If your goal is to reduce the number of Texans without a house, this bill is NOT the way to go. In fact, by criminalizing Texans with no where else to go, by stacking them with the extra burden of citations, arrests, and tickets, you are insuring they will have an even harder time getting employment and housing. Therefore, this bill exasperates the homelessness crisis and will be deadly for so many Texans. This will also penalize small and medium local governments who were not already harassing and criminalizing their unhoused neighbors. The incentive it requires, for city funding, to be cruel to their citizens is not only barbaric but, again, NOT helpful to anyone. PLEASE, I urge you as your constituent to vote NO on bill HB 1925.

Kathleen Henderson

Self - Artist

Austin, TX

People say “these camps are a hub for crime” and yes, they become a hub of “crime” when you make everything they do ILLEGAL. If you made sitting illegal, suddenly Zilker Park would be a hub for crime. There are more effective and humanitarian ways to uplift our homeless population and get them off the streets. Police break their possessions, burn their tents, run them out of town. You can't keep knocking them down when they're only at the third rung on the ladder and then wonder why it's not getting better. I'm disgusting by the signage in my neighborhood with it's pretty decals and colors. This bill is suggesting we make our citizens suffer and you want to make the bills signage a stupid sage green? You want to add a rainbow over a ATX skyline? It makes me throw up. With Texas at an all time temp high AND low you want us all to willingly expose these people and be okay with it? We did so much to bring them in from the winter storm and now we want to take their beds away? This is not the behavior I expected from my local government.

Ashley Hastings

Self, teacher

San Antonio, TX

As a Texas constituent, I strongly oppose this bill and believe that this will not reduce homelessness in the slightest. This will only leave the unhoused with warrants and arrests that will make it impossible to find employment or housing, thereby perpetuating homelessness. We need to find and implement more viable solutions that will treat those who are unhoused with dignity, compassion, and respect; and that will be effective in reducing homelessness.

Caitlin Galloway

self - tech support

Austin, TX

Hi,

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing. This will actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Kathryn McArdle

Self, software engineer

Austin, TX

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As a Texas resident, I strongly oppose HB 1925, as it is simply cruel to people experiencing homelessness and only exacerbates the "problem" it purports to address. By forcing cities to give unhoused people tickets they can't pay, warrants that stop them from obtaining identification, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill makes it harder for unhoused people to find employment and housing - which means it will keep more people homeless for longer, thus causing even more camping in public areas that this bill seeks to outlaw.

Further, this bill would create a huge financial burden for many of Texas's small communities that don't currently have such bans, especially with the threat of losing state grant funding. This bill hurts local governments of rural and suburban communities.

We can all agree that it is better to have fewer people who sleep on the streets and in public areas because they have nowhere else to sleep at night. Banning such "public camping" will not actually accomplish this goal of reducing the number of people who do this, because it doesn't give them anywhere else to go. In fact, banning camping takes us further away from this goal, because it only makes it harder for such people to secure housing and employment, the two things that are needed for them to be able to stop sleeping in public areas.

Jennifer Margulies

Self

AUSTIN, TX

This unfunded mandate on localities across the state will NOT help communities deal with the problem of homelessness! Experts on homelessness from local providers, federal agencies, and leading researchers all agree that housing and services -- not criminalization -- are the tools we need to invest in to solve the problem of homelessness. This punitive, short-sighted attempt at criminalization ignores the research and will only make it harder for unhoused people to find their ways out of homelessness, by saddling them with criminal records and making it harder to access employment.

Lora Blackwell

Self

Austin, TX

I'm writing to oppose HB 1925. This law is inhumane and dangerous. I do not support criminalizing poverty.

Denyse Hadley

Self-Spiritual Director

Austin, TX

Homeless people should not be treated like criminals. If they are treated that way I believe more will resort to behaving like criminals. We need to treat them with compassion for whatever the trauma they have faced in their lives, not cause more for them. I would be embarrassed to call Austin home if this is what it does. We have to find a better way and we can!

Madelyn Thomas

against HB 1925

Austin, TX

Our city has bought 2 hotels to house people. We are making (abet slow) progress towards solving this humanitarian problem in our city. Criminalizing homelessness hasn't worked in the past and we owe it to ourselves to give kindness and support a try.

Phoebe Long, Dr.

Self, Researcher

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Austin, TX

Please do not criminalize camping in a public place. Criminalizing homelessness makes it even harder for people who are experiencing hardship to get back on their feet. We should not punish people for living in poverty.

I live in Austin where people have been able to camp in public spaces for months. I know that people do not like to see people living in tents on the freeway. But I would much rather these people be visible so that they can access support when they need it and avoid the violence that can happen to them when they are forced into hiding.

Please ask yourself what Jesus would do. Would he criminalize people for the hardships they have experienced in their lives, or would he offer them compassion, love, and help when they are most in need? "But for the grace of God there go I." Each one of us could be in the exact same circumstance if we had been born into different circumstances and/or in different bodies.

Lisa Wakefield

Self - unemployed

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill that will eliminate living options and criminalize people who find themselves houseless. We should be writing house bills that work to help people, not make it more difficult on people who may be down on their luck. I urge you to oppose this bill and go back to the drawing board in order to make a lasting, helpful change. We're all people, are we not?

Ira Freilich

Self

Austin, TX

As a former Boy Scout and current camping enthusiast I am worried that this bill would criminalize my ability to take vacations/day trips.

According to my reading of the law, this would criminalize picnics. The list of prohibited shelters is very broad and includes things like blankets. The list of prohibited activities includes cooking and sleeping.

For example, if I took a day trip to a local watering hole, laid down a blanket, made something for lunch, and then took a nap in the sun I would have committed a class C misdemeanor. That's the very definition of a classic family picnic.

Please fix this.

Audrey Ference

myself, instructional writer

Austin, TX

We don't need to criminalize homelessness. Instead, we need real help and solutions for our unhoused neighbors. In this pandemic especially, with so many people out of work and struggling, and with housing prices in Austin skyrocketing, these kind of cruel laws only punish the most vulnerable. Shame on y'all.

Jennifer Touchton

self

Austin, TX

Homelessness should not be criminalized. Instead of jailing homeless people and giving them a criminal record, we should house and support them. No one deserves to be homeless.

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Desmond Coles

Self

Austin, TX

I completely oppose this bill for the following reasons:

The logical consequence of these specific measure is to either penalize homeless people for unavoidable things like sleeping, near resources they need in metropolitan areas. This will either cause them to incur fines of jail time, thereby making it harder to get out of homelessness, or they will be forced to go to more remote unsupervised areas where they don't have resources and are less safe, again thereby making it harder for them to change their circumstances.

This bill does nothing to help homeless or alleviate poverty, and for the reasons above will serve to worsen it.

Furthermore such specific measures should be left up to local municipalities who know their community best.

Lauren Wheat

Self, Senior Operations Specialist

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925. The bill would punish people who have nowhere else to go.

By imposing fines on people experiencing homelessness, we will push them further into poverty and farther from stability and housing. Moreover, when they are unable to pay they may face more severe consequences that will make it even harder to secure jobs and housing. This bill does nothing to solve the issue and may serve to exacerbate it.

Mattie B

Self

Austin, TX

Most people are much closer to being homeless than they are to be in the very cozy legislative seats you sit in. Our unhoused neighbors on the streets by and large do not want to be there, either, but what other choice do they really have? You don't adequately fund shelters and short-term housing; you keep the state's minimum wage pathetically below what it should be for a minimum wage earner to make enough to comfortably or even decently afford housing for themselves and possibly a family; most cities don't have anything close to a robust public transportation system that would make having a car unnecessary; I can go on and on. Whether intentional, or an almost comically bad series of accidental oversights, the state of Texas stacks the deck against a majority of its citizens while catering to the wealthiest, those fortunate to not worry about these troubles and in some cases are even the cause of these troubles. If you want to fix the homelessness problem that I'm sure is worse since the Abbott Blackouts of mid-February, I suggest you start finding ways to give people homes instead of taking what little home they may still have away from them. The point of government is to take care of ALL of its citizens, not just the rich people that line their pockets.

Marissa Vera

self, student

Austin, TX

I am against HB 1925. It criminalizes homelessness, ultimately making it harder for those experiencing homelessness to gain employment. The bill does not offer any solutions to the issue.

Arwen Weaks

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Self/Student

Austin, TX

This bill is inhumane, preying on those that society has failed to provide support for by criminalizing homelessness. Much of the homeless population are veterans, and they, nor any citizen, should be pushed out. Austin passing this bill would not only kill members of our own population, but would have a similar ripple effect on smaller cities who would likely pass more of these kinds of bills if we did.

Alicia Weigel

Self, Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Austin

Austin, TX

Members of the State Affairs Committee, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday.

As a Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Austin, I can attest that the proposed legislation violates the human rights of individuals this representative body is tasked with protecting. As a human being, I can attest that this bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go.

By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer. This is directly counter to the outcome desired by each member of the State Affairs Committee, who I know are committed to ensuring every Texan has equal opportunity to meaningfully contribute to our society.

In terms of additional economic harm, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today—and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting municipal governments and thus local control. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets—not to mention the humanity of unhoused people—you'll join me in opposing this bill.

Chip Bach

Self

Cedar Park, TX

Strenuously against criminalizing homelessness

Juliette Nguyen

Self, Academic Advisor

Austin, TX

This bill is unjust and you know it.

Just think about the people who died on the streets during the freeze. These people are trying to survive and this bill not only criminalizes them, but does nothing to solve for their lack of housing.

Let's just kick them while they're down, give them a Class C misdemeanor with a fine that you KNOW they'll be unable to pay. Even if they do pack up and pay the fine, what do you think they will do next? Undeniably, they will camp somewhere else because you've given them nothing to work with, took what little money they did have, and now make it even harder to find a job because of the misdemeanor on their record.

This bill is dehumanizing. This bill does not solve for homelessness, joblessness, nor public safety. It does not create productive citizens and does nothing for the state of Texas. I urge you to vote NO on HB 1925 (87R).

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Rebekah Coffield

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this legislation as it punishes people for being poor. It is unnecessary and cruel. It also creates unfunded mandates for local governments.

Christina Esquivel, ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST

CARITAS OF AUSTIN

AUSTIN, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Breanna Rollings

self

Austin, TX

I urge committee members to OPPOSE this bill. The amount of time and money this state wastes on finding more ways to criminalize our most vulnerable and homeless neighbors is unconscionable and immoral. Instead we should be listening to their needs and the organizations who are working directly with them, as well as investing resources in supporting sustainable pathways out of homelessness. Bills like HB 1925 do nothing to solve any real problem, but rather create more dangerous situations and instability for homeless residents. Again, I urge you to oppose this bill.

Mary Cathey

self

Austin, TX

HB 1925 should be opposed due to the fact that it does nothing to address the actual issues surrounding those experiencing homelessness and only lengthens the path towards overcoming it. The bill has only been put in place to provide visual comfort for those privileged enough to not hit hard times due to lack of resources and opportunity. It is an easy fix for those who like to hide the uglies of the world under a rock for their own comfort instead of addressing the underlined issues. For many females, and those identifying as female, experiencing homelessness, this bill will eliminate safe spaces for them to get much-needed rest and strip from them the general safety they need while enduring one of the toughest times of their lives. Fining those experiencing homelessness will do nothing but perpetuate the continuous struggle of trying to rebuild, overcome and ensure a stable future. Please oppose this bill.

Emily Kenny

Self/teacher

Round Rock, TX

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This is an illogical and harmful response to the homelessness crisis. This will absolutely not solve any problems for unhoused people.

Berenice Lara

Self

Austin, TX

Please make a camping ban on sidewalks, parks, under highways! The kids in austin do not have any safe parks, bike theft is up, and creek and parks are being trashed. Families deserve to feel safe walking in public sidewalks. Countless fires, anything goes camping is not a solution. Thanks!

Sheila Hutchings

self/teacher/parent of UT student

Houston, TX

My daughter is a junior at UT Austin. It is a scary, dangerous place for a young woman to live. She is online at this time but will be in person beginning next semester. She is worried about the out of control pan handling, harassing comments and all around filthy conditions between her apartment at 22nd and Pearl and the campus. It is time Austin and the state government take a serious look at the conditions our students and visitors face on a daily basis. The state should be ashamed that our capital is in the current condition. It is time to help the homeless. It is not a crime to be homeless, however, it is a problem when you are homeless and a criminal. The incidents that have taken place near Cane and ABel's the last few weeks are just a small example of what is occurring. The encampment across the street and in the neighboring new property is disgusting. What will it take before this is solved? I hope it doesn't take another student being hurt. Please solve this!

Katie Lain

self, student

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a born and raised Austinite and I strongly oppose this bill to criminalize camping in public places throughout the state of Texas. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go, many of whom are recently houseless since the Covid-19 pandemic. By saddling unhoused people with tickets that they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting identification and housing, and arrests that give them criminal records and poorer job opportunities, this bill would directly harm some of the most vulnerable Texans in the midst of an already traumatizing health pandemic. Rather than creating any solution for homelessness, this bill would only exacerbate the reasons for it, thereby compounding the issue. Keeping people homeless and/or incarcerated greatly increases costs not only to the state but to people's lives.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities throughout Texas that don't currently have sleeping bans, forcing this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds and thereby hurting local governments. If you care about rural governments, actually reducing homelessness by addressing its root causes (such as joblessness, poverty, and lack of health care) rather than criminalizing people for the state's inability to provide them with these necessary services, as well as the humanity of our unhoused neighbors who do not have the privilege to be here today to speak for themselves on this issue which directly affects them, you will oppose this bill with me.

Brendan Guerin

self - Grocery Store employee

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of

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getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

MONTE HUNTER

Self

Austin, TX

So much good can come from this bill. Help the homeless escape the spiral of hopelessness. Get help for mentally challenged and addicted. Preserve beauty and cleanliness of cities. Restore safety to downtowns. Please pass this bill.

BTW. I live in central Austin and experience the homeless almost daily.

Nicole Dodillet

Self-receptionist

Austin, TX

This bill is reprehensible on a ridiculous number of levels. This bill would punish those who have nowhere else to go and giving them tickets they can't afford to pay just prevents them from being able to save money towards housing. Homelessness isn't a choice being made by these people it was forced on them by a multitude of factors whether it was financial difficulties, mental health, natural disasters, the list goes on. This bill does nothing to help solve the homeless problem and in fact will only create further obstacles for those trying to work their way out of hard times. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban/rural local government budgets or the humanity of our unhoused population you'll oppose this bill.

Anna Stewart

self

AUSTIN, TX

I urge you to OPPOSE HB 1925. I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Ashleigh Gonzales, Housing stability Peer Support Specialist

Self- peer specialist

Pflugerville, TX

experiencing homelessness is NOT a crime. However, contributing to a system that keeps people homeless SHOULD BE! Criminalizing those experiencing homelessness does not make it go away.

Thomas Monahan, Mr.

self case manager

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Austin, TX

We have the information, law enforcement can tell you that criminalizing homelessness is not the answer. The people camping have no where to go and have no money. We don't have room to arrest these folks and then put them in jail. The homeless do not have money to pay for fines/tickets for camping. The problem with this bill is that people just don't want to see the homeless camping, it will do nothing to address the problem of homelessness. Why pass a bill that just wants to sweep the problem under the rug? This won't work and is the wrong thing to do to our neighbors in need.

Lyra Seaborn

self (student)

Austin, TX

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HB 1925. Criminalizing camping will not solve the root of the issue or aid individuals experiencing homelessness. Rather, these individuals need resources, such as shelter, medicine, food, job training, and other things that will reduce the need for camping in the first place. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer. Furthermore, this bill would force smaller cities and towns that don't currently have public sleeping bans to start enforcing one, creating a huge unfunded mandate on those communities in addition to being an inhumane and illogical response to the growing crisis of homelessness nationwide. I urge you to vote against this bill.

melissa montgomery

self Case Manger homeless supportive housing Austin, TX

San Antonio, TX

This bill is inhumane and a dereliction of duty by the Texas State Government. NO, it is not criminal to be homeless in a society that ignores other patriots and a government staffed with people like the senator who doesn't understand the meaning of civil servant. Serving yourselves is not governing. How bout we focus on the Electric Grid issues, that affect all of us? You are the criminals. FIX the root problem of homelessness which you are very well aware of. But, you have NO plan to humanely house anyone and no problem expecting Texans to foot your bills and we get more legislation that takes more of our rights away. Do you think we aren't paying attention? Covid and Snovid ring a bell? Shitty response to both-inept, victim-blaming shifting the blame to anyone to divert attention from your cockups. Tell Ken Paxton I'm still waiting for him to die for our texas economy like he promised he would. Another lie. I hope one of you or a really close family member becomes homeless seems until it happens to you there is no empathy for another person experiencing the same. What you do unto my brothers, you do unto me- JESUS remember him?

Chonda May, Case Manager

Self -Case Manager

Austin, TX

No comment

chloe long

self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925.

Geoffrey Stewart

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N/A

Austin, TX

I understand the premise and line of logic, but this should be done with actions intended to give refuge to these people. I've always thought a strictly ruled barracks that provides low level work would be an approachable concept. Off the street, reintegrated into working/society, their production and effort pays for their stay, and they have strict yet simple rules to live by or be ejected from the program. Either way, I agree with the premise of the bill, but do not think this is the method to do it in. Chances are this will shuffle these populations to other states. Why pass the problem when you can attempt to work on it.

Yvette Santos wissel

Self/Clinic Reception

Austin, TX

This is a inhumane and illogical answer to an enormous problem in the city of Austin. Is the answer to fine or incriminate the poor? Austin is better than this. This is disgusting

Austin Graham

Self

austin, TX

I am in very strong opposition to this bill. This bill is not a solution to the crisis of homelessness in Texas and our country as a whole. It is oriented around punishment. The criminalization of poverty and homelessness perpetuates cycles of harm. This looks like someone with only \$5 in their pocket being issued a \$500 citation simply because they were desperate to find somewhere to sleep that night. They are never able to pay this citation, issued a warrant and end up in jail. This makes it infinitely harder to get a job or find an apartment.

We need to move towards solutions. Decriminalizing drugs, aiding those who are addicted, providing real and effective mental health support, providing people with housing, having good paying jobs for all people. Not making people's very existence illegal because they are poor.

Emily Counts

Self

Austin, TX

Hi, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling on housed people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting IDs and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless for longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and midsize communities that don't have public sleeping bands today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

Harper Biewen

Self / Art Director at GSD&M

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925 as it is cruel and unproductive to the effort to end homelessness. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

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ALIVIA LAWLER
Safehorns UT Austin
GRAPEVINE, TX

What has happened to Austin! Wow, what a mess! How could anyone think repealing this was a great idea- with ZERO plan in action. ZERO. Police are understaffed, the lighting in UT Austin's West Campus has not been completed and crime continues to impact the area ON A DAILY BASIS. Businesses are hurting, kids are being targeted. It is NOT safe!!!. We have been asking for an extended patrol zone for the last five years similar to the University of Southern California safety model. HB1950 would provide that extended patrol that we are seeking to improve safety. Please pass this so we can get a start on getting our city cleaned up and help to those who need it the most.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Plies
COA taxpayers
austin, TX

Allowing people to camp in unsafe areas near high traffic streets isn't compassionate. It's leading to dangerous traffic & fire situations. There have been many fires at these camps some near or under vital traffic infrastructures & some homeless have been struck & injured or killed by cars. The homeless need drug/alcohol rehab, mental health & life skills training. The first step toward actually helping them is to ban camping everywhere except a designated area. Once the ban is in place, the city can move people to safer areas with access to services. Opening a large legal campsite with those services would go a good way towards integrating them back into society. Could do some bridge housing at the camp for those almost ready to be on their own. However it's largely not a roof problem. It's a life skills & drug culture problem.

Bertha Rios
Myself
Round Rock, TX

It is inhuman for you to take away what little of a home someone already has. How can you sit there and write this law without feeling any empathy for the people effected. Don't you think that if they could find "proper" housing they would. How dare you! Shame on you!!

Micaela Villegas
Self / work in housing
Lakeway, TX

This is crazy! We cannot respond to people being unhoused by enacting criminal charges. How can people be legally punished for not being able to afford housing? DO BETTER!

Sarah Bentley, MPH
self
Austin, TX

I am concerned about homelessness and I strongly OPPOSE HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded

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mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

serenity diaz

self

austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would creully punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid - size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of housed people, you'll oppose this bill.

It's crucial that we have empathy right now. I know it's human to want to protect yourself and safety but "out of sight out of mind" only hurts us all.

Miranda Haney

Self

Austin, TX

Hi! I'm a Texan strongly opposed to HB 1925. As someone commenting online from the comfort of my apartment, the idea of having nowhere to sleep at night seems really far off. The truth is, we never know when reality can be pulled out from under us. I'll be honest, when I see the tents pitched on the highway or in Boggy Creek Park, I immediately want to turn the other way and stay as far away as possible. I am ashamed that I act this way. I wish there was something I could do to help, but the problem feels so far out of my control that I just turn away. I believe that punishing these folks is NOT the way to a better future. It will make finding homes and employment that much harder for them. Surely there must be another way to tackle this issue... I am asking you, as my state representative, to please investigate a more permanent and humane solutions for the homeless community, instead of treating them like garbage that needs to be taken away to the landfill, out of sight and out of mind. This bill feels like a band aid that's going to have to be ripped off and replaced in another few years. Do it the right way. It's your job.

Carla George

Self

Austin, TX

I SUPPORT HB 1925 to ban camping in undesignated/approved areas. In February, my son and two other University of Texas at Austin students were assaulted by a public camper in West Campus. Fortunately, they were able to jump inside a vehicle as the assailant continued to punch and kick the car while yelling "all UT students are going to die!" He then assaulted another UT student, this time causing physical injury. Please support this bill to provide a sense of safety and community while cultivating compassionate solutions for those experiencing homelessness.

Chelsea Townsend

Self - housing case manager

Austin, TX

Hello,

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I'm a native Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this input. Please take some time to speak with local agencies and governments on the core causes and issues creating our homeless populations.

Sandra Ayala

SafeHorns

Harlingen, TX

I ask you to please support HB1925. We need to have better solutions in place in order to help our homeless population instead of letting them camp wherever they want. The problem has gotten out of hand and has created many health and safety problems. Crime rates have risen and criminals are becoming bolder. Please make the health and safety of your constituents a priority!

Natalie LaPerre

self, student and designer

Plano, TX

By placing fines on homeless people who likely cannot pay them, this can and generally will lead to them being arrested which will make it harder for them to get a job. This perpetuates homelessness and ignores it instead of working to help people.

Sarah Dixon

self- Seminary Student and Pastoral Intern at Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texas Presbyterian Seminary student concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruel punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. Instead of using police force time and money on policing vulnerable community citizens, we should NOT pass this and instead put money into getting at the root of homelessness and better/more shelters.

Sarah Dixon (former homeless outreach worker)

Sean Rose

Self

San Marcos, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and strongly oppose HB 1925.

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This bill will cruelly punish people with nowhere to go, saddle them with tickets they cannot pay. It will only make the problem worse and is short-sighted thinking at its worst and laziest.

Texans, whether or not they have homes, deserve so much better than this shameful bill.

Dash Harris

Self - entrepreneur

Austin, TX

I'm a 6th generation Texan, and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly place undue burden on our unhoused population. Saddling them with fines they cannot pay, instilling a hostile relationship with the police (who would be in the awful position of having to force people to move), and doing nothing other than further relegating our most vulnerable populations to the edges of society?? There must be a better way, and it's your job to find it.
VOTE NO on HB 1925.

Lauren St.Clair

Self, Software Developer

New Braunfels, TX

As a Texas resident, I do not support this bill. This is an inappropriate response to the growing housing crisis. This is especially harmful to smaller cities and towns with less funding. The housing crisis is certainly larger than one bill, but please direct this attention to solving the issue instead of criminalizing the issue that the government is responsible for tackling in the first place. This is an irresponsible bandaid solution that will cause harm for those that are homeless and smaller governments. I oppose this bill.

Audrey Grindstaff

Self- cashier

Lubbock, TX

People don't need to have a criminal record for doing something that they need to do to start alive.

Frank Netscher

Self - state employee

Austin, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This is the most anti-Texas bill that I've ever heard of. Big government banning camping on public lands? That's terrible. And, it will force the state to defund many rural local actors who simply do not have the resources to enforce this.

Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

If you care about the freedom to travel, reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Julia Burch

self

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Austin, TX

As a state, we do not provide safe places for people who are experiencing homelessness to sleep. There are few shelters and not enough low cost housing. Prohibiting sleeping in public criminalizing homelessness and creates a barrier to ever getting housing when it does become available. I strongly encourage you to vote NO on HB 1925. Put people first with proven solutions to end homelessness not criminalize it.

Miana Tran

SELF

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. You are targeting the unhoused people that don't have anywhere to go nor support during COVID. IF you fine them as a criminal, how will they pay it off? They need a place to stay, and these parks are PUBLIC USE. They do not bother anyone. The government NEEDS to help them, NOT just relocate them somewhere else. Austin has so many empty rooms in hotels and houses, but NONE are offered to them to get back on their feet and to care for themselves. They are literally just existing under this system that wants them to die. Evictions are high because of COVID, many people are losing their jobs, WHAT do you THINK was going to happen? You want the people to Austin to all eventually suffer? They NEED support and you NEED to give it to them and us.

erica gibbs

Caritas of Austin

Austin, TX

I am appalled by prohibiting camping in a public place and therefore wanting to provide those who are houseless with even more barriers than they face as it is.

Sophia Checa

Self

Austin, TX

This is not a solution for homelessness; it is also unconstitutional. This will make it harder for people to get housed, which is the solution to homelessness. Please stop wasting our tax dollars implementing frivolous bills that will ultimately be challenged in court, which will require tax dollars to defend.

Samantha Foss

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs. This bill would create cruel and unusual punishment for people who have nowhere else to go by to sleep outside. By giving unhoused people tickets they can't pay, we're ensuring they get warrants that prevent them from getting IDs and future avoidable arrests, guaranteeing people little ability to exit homelessness. We are creating overwhelming barriers and unnecessary harm for people who literally don't have another option. In addition, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you will not pass this bill.

Leah Bostwick

Caritas of Austin- Grants Coordinator

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Austin, TX

Criminalizing homelessness will not reduce homelessness.

Tissie Elliott

self, retired teacher

Austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to HB 1925 and encourage you to vote against it. Homeless people should not be made criminals. They need a place to live and they need support to become healthy productive members of our society.

Melissa Lebet, LMSW

Caritas of Austin

Round Rock, TX

Please say NO to this house bill. It criminalizes homelessness and, in turn, makes it harder for people to get housed. Criminal records, warrants, and unpaid tickets that will result from the passing of this bill will make it much harder for folks experiencing homelessness to find permanent stable housing. This hinders people from getting jobs and securing income, which is what is needed in order to stay housed. Please vote NO on this. I, as a Texas resident, am strongly against it.

Lindsey Hurvitz, Miss

Self

Austin, TX

I simply do not feel that this is the answer. If you have an issue with the homeless people spend the money to purchase them homes. That actually saves the tax payers money. It will cost the tax payer significantly more money if we continue to arrest them and make what they do illegal. Also i have never actual felt unsafe in the presence of a homeless person.

Sydney Smith

Self

Austin, TX

Hello, as a Texan and an active community member, I am incredibly concerned about the homelessness issue and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would inhumanely punish people for having nowhere else to go. By ticketing people that do not have a stable place to call home we will be setting people up for failure. People that cannot pay tickets receive warrants and warrants lead to arrests - all of this only places more barriers in people's lives and ultimately prevents them from achieving well-being and becoming productive members of society. This bill would only cause the issue to be covered up by the public and we do not need to cover up the issue of homelessness, but instead provide housing and compassion to our fellow Texans!

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Anastasia Buitron, PSH Case Manager

Caritas of Austin

Austin, TX

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Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Paige Sanders

Self, Content writer

Austin, TX

I encourage the members of the house to vote AGAINST HB 1925. Criminalizing public camping does nothing to resolve the issue of homelessness. All it does is create a criminal record for a population that is already vulnerable.

Jonathan Hamilton

self

Austin, TX

This is ridiculous and counterintuitive. Do better.

Gabriela Perches, Miss

Caritas of Austin

austin, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

Emily Lewis

Caritas of Austin

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. And by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt an individual's chance of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused

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people, you'll oppose this bill.

Jill Reilly

Safehorns

Austin, TX

Please pass this bill. The current camping situation helps no one - not the homeless and not the residents of Austin. It creates an environment where everyone is in more danger and more at risk. Please make this a criminal offense so that those who need help or assistance are more willing to see the options and, hopefully, seek aid. The current situation does neither. Austin is no longer Texas's jewel. Passing this bill is a step in restoring its shine.

James Martin

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texas Presbyterian Seminary student concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. It is a large over-reach of state power into issues that need to be handled in city government that understand the dynamics of their city more. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. Instead of using police force time and money on policing vulnerable community citizens, we should NOT pass this and instead put money into getting at the root of homelessness and better/more shelters.

Sincerely,

James Martin

Piper Nelson, Ms.

The SAFE Alliance

Austin, TX

80% of U.S. mothers experiencing homelessness had previously experienced domestic violence;
Up to 20% of victims and survivors of sexual assault became homeless as a result of the violence they experienced;
27% of Texas former foster youth report experiencing homelessness within three years of having aged out of the system; and
62% of homeless individuals in Austin/Travis County report that past trauma or abuse caused their current homelessness.

Homelessness is a multi-faceted issue that must be addressed at the root. It is not as simple as issuing a camping ban or not, and it should not be defined as primarily a criminal justice issue. Homelessness is a human services issue and can only be addressed successfully as such.

Sakina Khalif

self student

Mesquite, TX

This directly incriminates the homeless for something they cannot help. The government should aid them and not imprison them

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for being disadvantaged.

Jessica McKenny

Self; teacher and parent of UT student

Spring, TX

I support the prohibition of camping in public spaces in Austin, especially around UT. It creates unsafe conditions for UT students.

Lauren Byrd-moreno

Self, advocate

Silsbee, TX

I don't understand how criminalizing homelessness is going to rectify this situation, we need more solutions not more problems.

Jacqueline Taylor

Self

Austin, TX

I am commenting on HB 1925 because this bill is immoral and will negatively impact our neighbors who are already heavily demonized in our politics today. This bill continues to make excuses for the abhorrent treatment of our neighbors experiencing homelessness and uses them as scapegoats for the true problem our state, and much of our nation, is facing: a severe shortage on affordable housing and supportive services alongside rapid gentrification and displacement.

I see homelessness every day. Look at my address. Homelessness is a huge problem, but we cannot wish wish it away by criminalizing those who are most impacted by it--our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the systemic issues that perpetuate this issue. And lets be clear, that is what this bill is doing. It is not solving anything, in fact it is making the problem worse by putting people through another financial and social hurdle.

Housing is a human right, and until we get the political will to make this a fact in Texas, the very least we can do is make sure our neighbors across the board have a safe place to stay without the risk of being criminalized for trying to survive.

Thank you for your time.

Jacq

John Thomas

SafeHorns

Houston, TX

Camping in a public place does not help anyone. The homeless need permanent shelters/housing and the streets and public places are not the place for these people to camp. I support HB 1925 in regards to prohibiting camping in a public place and creating a law that would make it a criminal offense.

Christian Rees

Self

Austin, TX

The move to criminalize sleeping in public spaces harkens back to unjust and biased "vagrancy laws" in our nation's past. Like

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those laws, HB 1925 criminalizes poverty. Rather than dealing with the issues facing unhoused people, this law will target, harass, and saddle them with unfair monetary penalties or jail time. Why do we insist that the solution to our state's chronic inability to help the unhoused is one of callous disregard and aggression. Why not propose laws that allocate state funds to cities to build new shelters and provide the unhoused with social programs and support?

HB 1925 is harmful, cruel, and devoid of the compassion needed to help the unhoused. If basic kindness and ethics won't sway you, what about Jesus's focus on the meek and the impoverished? His teachings of grace and collective aid?

Vote NO on HB 1925, and start working on legislation that helps the unhoused.

Parker Losefsky

Self

Austin, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB1925. This bill cruelly punishes people who have nowhere to go and ignores the root causes of homelessness. Giving homeless neighbors tickets they can't pay and warrants that give them a criminal record only makes it harder to get out of homelessness. If you want to take a step in actually solving homelessness then you will vote against HB1925.

Amy Knop

Self - not representing any organization

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925. A public sleeping ban is inhumane and not a solution to the issue of homelessness--it only makes it harder for people to recover by giving them criminal records. I've participated in our local census of people experiencing homelessness for the past decade, and most people I met sleeping on the streets were there because of events like unexpected medical debt, tragic loss of family members, and veterans recovering from PTSD. If you don't think you could ever be in this position, I invite you to reflect on the precarious nature of housing in Texas. Someday it could be you. I hope instead we can move forward with legislation that actually address people's needs. Thanks for your time.

Mimi Sakarett

self, software engineer

Austin, TX

Hi there. Thank you for taking the time to read this comment.

I am a Texan concerned about people experiencing homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly and unjustly punish people for having nowhere else to go in the wake of the global pandemic. Plus, this bill would hurt unhoused folks' chances of getting employment and housing by saddling them with tickets that they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them a criminal record. This will actually make it much more difficult for people to escape homelessness and it will keep more people homeless for longer. This bill will not reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. It will keep these people in homelessness.

Additionally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans currently. This bill would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds which would hurt local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

I hope in the future that you will support bills that uplift and support our homeless neighbors instead of ones that criminalize their existence. That way we can help those people live better lives and contribute to society instead of placing more people in jails.

Thank you again for reading this.

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Mimi Sakarett

alexa motega

self

san marcos, TX

Hello! My name is Alexa Motega. When I was a child, my mother fled Wisconsin while she was pregnant with me from her abusive husband to Austin, Texas. She had no where to go. My mother and I spent nights under the bridges of phlugerville. My mother fought against the world pushing her down and raised me. My mother was a bastard child of the Chippewa reservation. She was a ward of the state but graduated from the University of Wisconsin. I don't know if my mother could have gotten us out and off the streets the way she did if she was darker. If her mother hadn't been white as snow and she had not looked the way she did. I say this because in the America I grew up in, people look each other in the eye and only see their own reflection. She was fighting against people like you, someone who just wouldn't have understood what she was going through. I hate to say but it's never too late.

Billy Hickey

Self - Wellness coach and advocate

Austin, TX

It's common sense, people who are unhoused need to sleep somewhere. Without access to a home, thousands of Texans are faced with no choice but to sleep outside on public land. Shelter is a basic human necessity of living, criminalizing those who need to seek shelter on public land does nothing to help them improve their lives, feeds the prison industrial complex, and is completely unnecessary. There are ways to help unhoused people get back on their feet, making their existence a criminal offense only deepens the hole these human beings are already in. These are not abstract ideas, these are human beings who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Mayra Lopez, Ms

Caritas of Austin

Austin, TX

Homelessness must not be criminalized. The homeless population camps in public places because they don't have a place to live. It is a situation that must be addressed with compassion and humanity. Our city officials and decision makers should provide the necessary resources so that nobody has to live in the streets of Austin.

Sarah Dillard

Self, Nurse Practitioner

AUSTIN, TX

In addition to being morally repugnant, criminalizing homelessness is ineffective, and costs more money than solving the problem by ensuring access to housing. This is potentially unconstitutional, wastes precious public funds, and makes it harder for people to exit homelessness by saddling them with criminal records. This bill is clearly not intended to address any of the complex issues exacerbating homelessness in our communities. It provides no solutions to assist Texans experiencing homelessness and its disingenuous wording does little to hide that the proponents of this legislation only want homeless people out of sight for those who have been more fortunate.

Mary Gray

Self / enterprise architecy

Plano, TX

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I support this. My son is a student at UT and the homeless population around the campus has made it totally unsafe.

Shawna Arnesen
Caritas of Austin
Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Leticia Perches
Myself
McAllen, TX

??????

"Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill."

Rebecca McCarthy, Dr
Self
Amarillo, TX

The encampments in Austin are a hazard. Please stop allowing it.

Mario Alan Perches
Self
McAllen, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I would like to express my vehement opposition to HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By shackling our vulnerable homeless population with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this disgusting bill would hobble their efforts to obtain employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Lastly, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Julia Montoya
Caritas of Austin
Manchaca, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Lori Vargas
Self
Manchaca, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Eri-Ife Adepoju
Self- student
Austin, TX

Local governments, already under a lot of work and pressure, will have to fund this bill without any help from the state. People who camp in a public place only do so temporarily and due to the ever increasing high living costs. They are also Texans and Americans who do lot deserve to be treated like criminals.

Lauryn Flores
Self / Student
Mercedes, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Caroline Taylor

Self - IT

Austin, TX

Dear Texas House of Representatives,

I am a native Texan and I urge you to vote NO on Bill 1925, which would penalize extremely poor people for being poor. People without homes don't need handcuffs, they need support and care. They need access to resources. Not being thrown in jail, cited for existing, and burdened with fines they cannot pay.

I implore you to please vote NO on Bill 1925. Our neighbors without homes are desperately relying on your leadership and bravery to not add to their already immense and unmanageable burdens.

Thank you,
Caroline

Mae Stone

Self, student

Austin, TX

I am a concerned Texan against criminalizing sleeping outdoors for people with nowhere else to go.

Baothuan Lynguyen, Housing Stability Specialist

Caritas Of Austin

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Michael McKenny

Self/UT PARENT

Spring, TX

Support for the safety of the UT community.

Riley Lynguyen, PSH Case zmanager

Self: Case Manager

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Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Yvonne Keyrouz

Self, artist

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texan strongly opposed to homeless and HB 1925. This bill creates more problems than it solves. Criminalizing people who have no means to shelter themselves will only make it more difficult for them to become self supportive, leaving the burden once again on us, their tax paying neighbors. Using tax money to creative sustainable housing would be a better goal for ending homelessness in the long run. This bill is cruel and thoughtless towards the further.

Cheryl Nguyen

Self

Houston, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Claire Cummiskey

Self/student

Austin, TX

As a resident of the city of Austin I am strongly opposed to HB 1925.

Taryn Silvas-Guerrero, Miss

Self, Student

Austin, TX

I am a Texas resident and I strongly oppose this bill. This bill will cruelly punish people who have nowhere else to go, and by giving unhoused people tickets they can't pay, and arrests that give them a criminal record, this bill will hurt people's chances of employment and housing, and actually keep more people homeless for longer. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, everyone should oppose this bill as well!

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Marcia Spillers

Self

Austin, TX

I agree. Camping in public places should not be allowed due to health and safety factors, and should be considered a criminal offense.

Carol Bohle, Executive Director

El Paso Coalition for the Homeless

El Paso, TX

Chairman Paddie and members of the Committee, I wish to register my opposition to HB 1925 regarding camping in a public place; creating a criminal offense. I am the Executive Director for the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless and in our community, the unsheltered homeless population continues to decline due to the excellent work of our Street Outreach teams, Housing First focus and Permanent Housing prioritization. This bill criminalizes being homeless, perpetuating the homelessness/criminal justice cycle, and will make it harder for persons experiencing homelessness to access services. It also strains our already overextended legal system to enforce an initiative which is not a serious issue in this region.

El Paso has had much success in reducing homelessness and has developed an efficient and collaborative Street Outreach program, consisting of numerous outreach teams, with focuses ranging from substance use, mental health, human trafficking, veterans and youth, as well as law enforcement, which has been effective in moving unsheltered homeless off the street, out of encampments and other places not meant for human habitation, into housing and much needed services. We work closely with our local city and county governments in these activities.

I implore you to not pass this bill that will negatively impact El Paso and other Texas communities, leaving these decisions instead to the local jurisdiction to address and to the experts in the field to bring our unsheltered homeless into housing and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Carol Henry Bohle

Executive Director

El Paso Coalition for the Homeless

Steph Adler

self

Austin, TX

Criminalizing homelessness is not solving the issue. I have worked in housing services in Texas for over 5 years and worked with many individuals who are barred from accessing permanent housing due to barriers created by their interactions with the criminal justice system. Short-term housing programs do not actually work long term, but the State and Federal governments are not willing to put more money into long-term permanent housing programs. There are not enough subsidized housing programs, and not enough capacity within the existing housing programs, to house all people who need long-term assistance. Residential housing programs similar to Public Housing are few and far between, meaning that people who need a more supportive living environment to stay stably housed are on a waitlist for literally a decade to get into an appropriate program. Voucher programs like Section 8 are more flexible, but people run into issues with landlord restrictions, and it is incredibly challenging (even in a "liberal" city like Austin) to find landlords who are willing to work with voucher programs, and be flexible on application requirements. People are living on the streets for years, sitting on multiple housing waitlists (in Austin - the Coordinated Assessment as well as HACA waitlists), because the housing service system itself is not functioning well due to underfunded programs, understaffed programs, a pandemic that has further limited service provision for over a year now, and lack of funds to get people the most basic elements to help them connect with housing programs (i.e. phones - I am baffled at how there is no service program that gets cell phones to people experiencing homelessness who need them). Additionally, in order to access housing programs, unhoused folks need to be in the cities - there are not many housing programs in rural areas or smaller cities,

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not to mention other social services that exist more robustly in larger cities such as mental health services, services for special populations, youth services, etc.

There are not enough shelters - as is clearly evident from the recent ice storms - to shelter folks living on the street, and therefore people are forced to camp outdoors. People on the streets do not have other places to go. Camping in a "public place" will always be a vague term open to interpretation by the people in power - and those people tend to be the police who are most frequently engaging with unhoused people. Criminalizing camping will only build up jail populations, create higher barriers and more trauma for the people you are criminalizing, and push people farther away from the services that can help them work towards housing goals. The future this Bill envisions is one where any unhoused person inevitably ends up in jail, and is destined to an ongoing traumatizing cycle of imprisonment and living on the streets. In this future, how is anyone supposed to actually attain permanent housing and exit this cycle?

Selena Steward, MSW, Community Care Coordinator

First Baptist Church Austin

San Marcos, TX

As someone who provides direct care to people experiencing homelessness, a law like this is extremely detrimental to the work I do. The progress I have made in my community is largely due to my ability to locate people living outside. Criminalizing and banning people from camping only forces people to live in less habitable places. These places are often more dangerous places such as drainage systems where rains have caused people to drown. Allowing people to camp in safe places near the resources they need is more helpful for providers such as myself to offer the care they need to work towards stable housing, employment, and other helpful activities for a thriving society.

Criminalizing behaviors of people who are unhoused only perpetuates the cycle of homelessness. A criminal background only makes it more difficult to gain employment and housing and keeps people homeless longer. A bill like this would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Please, I urge you, do the right thing and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Pam Jackson

Self

Austin, TX

My vote is to prohibit public camping. Our city has become extremely dangerous. The filth is overwhelming and our businesses are suffering. Make this a criminal offense.

Ana Martinez

Self/Case manager

Waco, TX

I am a Texas resident living in Waco, TX and I oppose this bill. This bill cruelly punishes unhoused people and would only make the housing crisis in Texas worse. By criminalizing sleeping in public, people who would otherwise have no criminal record would enter the criminal justice system. Once in the criminal justice system it is all the more difficult to obtain housing, thus leading to more homelessness. As someone who has worked first hand with victims of domestic violence, low income families, and other populations susceptible to homelessness, I have seen how detrimental a criminal record can be to finding a job and obtaining stable housing. Please vote against this bill and work towards creating solutions that actually help alleviate our state's housing crisis.

Megan Koeneman

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Austin, TX

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Hello, I am a Texas Presbyterian Seminary student concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Mary Porras

Self. Self employed

The Woodlands, TX

I support this bill wholeheartedly. I want a SAFE ZONE in the West Campus area and all around the University of Texas. Our students deserve to have an environment that's safe and secure without having to worry about their personal safety.

Christine Sheraden

Self

Mansfield, TX

As a parent of TWO UT students who have lived and will continue to live in West campus, I am very concerned about these camps in public places! Covid has impacted these area businesses terribly and I personally feel allowing camping in a public place further hampers these struggling businesses very negatively. It is also a huge safety issue for customers, students, and business people. Aggressive panhandling is a very serious issue. We desperately need to step up and take care of this situation immediately. Austin deserves better. Austin needs to take this issue as a serious issue and DO something to change its image and create a safe and thriving business community, not a thriving campsite community.

Katie Henderson

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Ignite Texas, Mission Presbytery

Austin, TX

As a future pastor, caring for my neighbors is top priority. HB 1925 is the exact opposite of caring for your neighbor. It criminalizes being homeless rather than making housing our homeless community members a priority. Our state is not beautiful and clean until all our residents are housed and sheltered from the elements. HB 1925 is disgusting and only makes life more challenging for our fellow Texans. I am strongly against HB 1925.

Amy Edwards

SafeHorns

Rowlett, TX

As a citizen of Texas and a UT alumni and parent of a UT alumni. I want our kids at UT in Austin to be safe and protected! I also want the homeless men and women to have a safe place to reside and allowing them to camp unrestricted anywhere in the city IS NOT safe for ANYONE!! Please vote to make unrestricted camping in Austin inhuman and unsafe!!

Rachel Warren

Self-educator

Baytown, TX

There should be clearly defined areas for public camping. Every time I drive to Austin, the public camping has continued to expand into different areas. I know several friends, acquaintances who have visited and are astounded by the sheer number of 'encampments' throughout the entire city. It's becoming a public health issue.

Amelia Long

Self, nonprofit employee

Austin, TX

I am a Texan against HB 1925. Y'all should be ashamed of yourselves for proposing to criminalize homelessness. If passed this bill will just pass the buck and create more problems. Invest in proactive solutions to homelessness, not lazy ideas like this bill.

Jennifer Cregar

self, small business owner

Austin, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness, and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday, March 25. This bill would cruelly punish fellow Texans who are forced to take refuge on our streets and other public places due to lack of sufficient permanent housing options and systemic underfunding of shelters, mental healthcare, addiction treatment, and other services that can prevent people from seeking shelter in public settings. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from securing necessary identification, and arrests that give them criminal records, HB 1925 would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing. In fact, this bill likely would keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, in turn, hurting local governments and your shared constituencies.

Thank you for representing me and our shared humanity by OPPOSING HB 1925.

Giovanna Dorvelus

self, student

Mission, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Lisa Almgren

Self

Austin, TX

I support this bill

Darian Salinas

Self / student

Austin, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having no where else to go. Plus by saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay,

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warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt these people's chances of getting employment and housing which is counterproductive to the bills cause to get people off the streets.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, in turn, hurting local governments.

If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and local government budgets, or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Zoe Pham

Self - Student

Bellaire, TX

Hello, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go or live. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of gaining employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer. Homeless people are not an eyesore and are just attempting to live the only way they are able to. Homeless people are people, and deserve to sleep soundly without fear of persecution for sleeping outside because they have no other option.

The bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today and would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you truly care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Olyvia Mathews

Self, student

Manor, TX

This is inhumane and unnecessary. During this pandemic especially, more and more people are losing their jobs and homes. Criminalizing them will not solve any issues. Instead, the state should provide more resources to help

Mary Beth Jester

self

Austin, TX

Please do not continue to criminalize homelessness. Where do think they can go? Once they are fined or jailed, it becomes even harder to find housing. No one wants them on sleeping on the street, but they deserve help, not criminal records. Everyone deserves to be treated with human dignity, not scorn. For the sake of our fellow citizens, we need programs that house and support those who are homeless and those who are in danger becoming homeless.

Brianna Jackson

Self

Austin, TX

I am a Texas resident concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting an ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances at employment and receiving housing. This cycle results in keeping people homeless longer.

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If that is not enough to persuade you, this bill would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grand funds, hurting local government. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

Jessica Murillo

Self

Round Rock, TX

I support this bill

Amy Crone

Self Project Manager

Prosper, TX

I have a student at the University of Texas at Austin and am dismayed by the increase in public camping since the camping ban was repealed in 2019. It is disgraceful that the city of Austin has turned into a homeless encampment. This is a public health and safety issue and needs to be resolved immediately. There is no incentive for “campers” to seek or accept help to begin the journey towards a stable, safe living environment as long as they can legally camp in public. Since the city of Austin has failed miserably to develop a working solution to end homelessness, it’s time for the state to step in.

Mackenzie Morris

Self, Engineer

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

]

Jonathan Freeman

Self

Austin, TX

This bill is an abomination that disregards the human dignity of countless unhoused people. You solve homelessness with housing, not by further oppressing a group of people who are already so vulnerable. Do not allow this evil and disgusting piece of legislation to pass.

Jessica McCarty

self , student

Bryan, TX

Absolutely not. This bans camping in a public place and is a slap in the face to the growing number of homeless people that couldn't wait 12 months for a stimulus or the horrible medical bills that cost people's lives. This is inhumane. I believe that the bare minimum should be anyone caught camping in a public place should be offered a safe shelter.

This bill would hurt unhoused citizens that do NOT deserve to be punished for their poverty. The criminal offense would hurt

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their opportunity of employment and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Additionally, this bill would force a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid size towns to enforce the no sleeping ban. This also would threaten local governments of losing state grant funds. If you care at all about the homeless or Texas citizens you would oppose this bill.

Thank you.
Jessica McCarty

Alison Kerbow
Self/attorney
Spring, TX

I support this bill

Dave George
Self
Austin, TX

I support this bill to limit public camping to designated areas.

Laura Cuervo
Self
Austin, TX

This is a ridiculous law. How you can criminalize being a living human being without providing options and enough safe places for everyone to sleep. If someone gets kicked out of their home, foreclosed, evicted, can't afford a hotel or have a community to rely on, where else can they go? Should they just accept being arrested and having their chance at a decent job taken away? Should they break into a private place so they can sleep? Just kill themselves bc they can't even legally live? This law makes no sense and you cannot force every municipality and city to enforce it.

Lydia Froncek
Self
Austin, TX

Bill 1925 will be truly deadly to hundreds if not thousands of our neighbors here in Austin. The combined affects of covid, rising housing prices and lack of public infrastructure and safety measures is leaving our most vulnerable populations by the wayside. Our neighbors camping in public spaces are doing their best to get back on their feet under extremely difficult conditions. Criminalizing their right to sleep will essentially end their lives. Can you imagine having a criminal offense while trying your best to get basic needs met? Treat people like people not animals and say no this deadly bill. How dare you call yourself a civil servant and propose a bill this harmful to our community?

Sincerely,
Lydia Froncek

Charisse Bersamina
Self- Teacher
Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This
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bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Melania Berry

Self/admin

Austin, TX

Vote no on this bill! This is not the way to handle the growing need for assistance to our un houses neighbors. Vote NO!!

James Lewis

Self retired

Austin, TX

I am against this bill. It punishes everyone, the homeless are made criminals, local governments are forced to ban camping by the homeless or lose funding.

Homeless citizens are not helped by giving them a record. Oppose this bill and try for a positive program that assists these human beings to become successful. Making something illegal doesn't make it disappear.

Frankie Johnson

Self

Austin, TX

Hello, my name is Frankie and I am concerned about homelessness in our communities and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill will punish people for being homeless, and not having anywhere else to go. Bombarding unhoused people with tickets they can't afford, warrants that prevent them from getting an ID, and arrests that give them criminal records makes it harder for people to get chances at future employment and stable housing.

This bill will also create an unfunded mandate for many smaller and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today. It would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funding, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government's funding, or the humanity of homeless people, you'll oppose of this bill.

Noah Siegler

Self

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused

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people, you'll oppose this bill.

David Haney

Self (Community college teacher)

Austin, TX

Please repudiate and reject HB 1925. The idea of attempting to criminalize sleeping in public is asinine -- a waste of community resources and law enforcement time and energy. Moreover, a mandate from the state legislature that compels local communities to address homelessness in a uniform manner statewide flies in the face of conservatives' professed ideal of local autonomy in policy-making.

Molly Siegler

Self

Austin, TX

Sample text:

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Marc McCann

Self

Austin, TX

I'm actively opposed to this bill and implore the house to not prohibit those without ample resources to be harmed with such unsupportive sweeping legislation. Divert funds from other projects and invest in policies that support the unhoused rather than punishing them.

Sarah Rigdon

Self, writer

Austin, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

This bill would also create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, thereby hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the dignity of human beings who've come on hard times and found themselves homeless, you'll oppose this bill.

If you really want to address homelessness, you'll work to increase affordable housing across Texas and advocate to the federal

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government to pitch in, because a slow and steady defunding of public housing since the Reagan administration has been a huge contributor to the problem. We can't solve homelessness until we address it on a national level. Making homeless people live in fear and hide in the shadows doesn't actually reduce homelessness, it just means you don't see it as much.

Pam Viator

Safehorns

Nederland, TX

Camping in public places, specifically in and around the campus of the University of Texas, has proven detrimental to students, staff, and visitors to the state's most esteemed public university. Crime rates have risen toward students, as many live in the West Campus area surrounding the University, as the University does not have enough on campus housing to accommodate all students that attend. Additionally, the University provides a significant revenue to the entire city of Austin. For reasons listed above, it is critical that a "safe zone" be enforced around the University and that public camping be deemed illegal.

sarah senterfitt

self

austin, TX

I support HB 1925.

Netanya Jamieson

Caritas Of Austin

Austin, TX

don't this this please

Kimberly Schonhorst

Self

Wimberley, TX

This bill would cruelly punish unhoused people for having no where else to go. This bill would cause unjust harm to people living in Texas - parents, children, LGBTQIA+ folk, BIPOC folks. Criminalizing public sleeping would saddle unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, give them criminal records, and prevent them from receiving jobs in the future this keeping them unhoused even longer. In a time when unemployment rates and extremely high, this is a harmful bill that would not serve the community in any positive way.

Jennifer Mestan

Self / Virtual Assistant

Frisco, TX

I am in support of this bill. My daughter is a student at UT Austin and within her first few weeks of living on campus, she had several terrifying encounters with members of the homeless population. She has been harassed for food and money, her car has been pounded on at stoplights, she's been catcalled in the streets and more. Decriminalizing camping has led to a vast increase in the homeless population in downtown Austin and it helps no one. These individuals are not getting the medical/mental help they need and the largely young population of students who live in the area walk around in fear of being attacked (as has happened multiple times in the few short months she's lived there). I believe making camping a criminal offense again will at the very least, help curb this issue.

Mario Gonzalez, Mr

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Self

San Antonio, TX

Simply put the prohibitions in this act are inhumane. People need help, I'm doing the best that I can. Please do better.

Morgan Mestan

Self / UT Student

Austin, TX

As a student at UT Austin who has seen the devastating effects that decriminalizing camping has had on the the volume of homeless population in our area, I am in support of this bill. Hardly a week goes by where I don't hear of some type of robbery, attack, etc. on a fellow student by a homeless individual. The situation around campus has gotten MUCH worse for us since camping was decriminalized.

Adan Vega

Home owner

Austin, TX

I support this bill which include safety around downtown.

Liz Doan

self

Sugar Land, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness, and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly and unjustly punish people for having nowhere else to go in the wake of the global pandemic. This bill would also hurt unhoused folks' chances of getting employment and housing by saddling them with tickets that they cannot pay. Warrants prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them a criminal record. This will make it much more difficult for people to escape homelessness and it will keep more people homeless for longer. This bill will not accomplish anything positive.

Furthermore, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans currently and would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds which would hurt local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you will oppose this bill.

I hope in the future that you will support bills that uplift and support our homeless neighbors instead of ones that criminalize their existence. That way we can help those people live better lives and contribute to society instead of placing more people in jails.

Catherine Bohne

Self, Holistic Healthcare

Austin, TX

I support this bill. Public camping should not be allowed. It is destroying our beautiful city and is creating an unsafe environment throughout Austin. The placement of trash cans throughout the tent cities is not helpful. The homeless people are still throwing the trash on the ground. The Austin City Council is just encouraging more homeless people to relocate to Austin. You are not actually helping the homeless by encouraging them to live in the streets. You need to implement programs to give them mental healthcare, break addictions, and become productive criticses. Allowing them to live in tents on the streets is hurting our city instead of helping the homelessness.

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Jackie Grimm

Self

Beaumont, TX

Please pass for the safety of all.

Marilyn Hartman

Member and Advocate, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Central Texas

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. Municipalities across the state are struggling with homelessness and the resultant camping as best they can. However, until there is sufficient housing or other places for homeless people to go that is authorized, this bill basically criminalizes homelessness. Many homeless individuals have mental illness and/or substance use disorder; they need treatment and appropriate supports, not incarceration. This brings up the whole issue of lack of services and jail diversion facilities. This state can't just ban homeless camping without making other provisions for people, many of whom are unable to function sufficiently to help themselves out of their unfortunate living situations. These are human beings, many of whom are unable, unlike the rest of us, to provide the basic needs for themselves. Have compassion, but also work toward solving the issue with appropriate solutions, not criminalizing it.

Amy Betzen

Self/Homemaker

Hereford, TX

Camping in a public place, especially one in close proximity to the university campus isn't safe for the young, college community.

Erin Cooper

self

Lockhart, TX

I'm a Texan concerned with homelessness and I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs tomorrow morning. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go, not to mention saddle them with tickets and warrants they can not pay. This bill will only hurt people's chances at future employment and housing. It is not a real solution, it just discards the people and treats them like they are trash. It is inhumane and wrong.

If you care about people, reducing homelessness, and the humanity of unhoused people, you will OPPOSE THIS BILL!

Eric Kunish, Advocacy Chair

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Austin, TX

I am against this bill. It criminalizes poor, mental illness etc.

Carla Ruiz

Self

San Antonio, TX

This is not safe not clean and clears a bad appearance to the city's image

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Lisa Dombroski
Self HR Manager
Flower Mound, TX

Agree. Support this bill for the safety of my college student

Patience Welch
Self
Austin, TX

It is not a criminal offense to be homeless. To support this bill at any time, but especially during a pandemic, is a disgusting act that is devoid of humanity. This past year, a global illness has been stripping people of their lives, incomes, and homes while our government's choices furthered these disasters. Meanwhile, we've been losing people every day to the opioid epidemic due to corrupt business practices and lobbying. Banning sleeping outside solves nothing, it only puts a blindfold on your eyes to the reality of our fellow citizens' suffering. You're not a horse, you shouldn't need a blindfold. If you support this bill you're barely a human. Focus on your own house, that you likely get to comfortably go home to every night. You don't own "outside."

Linda Xiong
Self
Austin, TX

I am writing to strongly oppose HB 1925, which would criminalize people sleeping in an unsheltered location. People experiencing homelessness and staying in an unsheltered location have nowhere else to go and may not seek shelter because they do not know about resources in their community or their community does not have the resources to shelter them or a number of other reasons. Unhoused people already do not have enough resources and adding more financial burden to their situation will keep them unhoused even longer.

In addition, this is costly for our communities and law enforcement departments. Local city and county departments in small population areas do not have the resources to house people, let alone ticket them for being unhoused.

Lastly, the true solution to homelessness is not criminalization. It is housing AND strong supportive services. It is building a community in which people can thrive. This bill would not be one that supports building thriving communities.

Christel Erickson-Collins
Self retired
Cedar Park, TX

I am opposed to this bill because it is overreach on the part of the State. Local jurisdictions should be left to solve their problems in the way the citizens feel is best for their communities. This bill violates the precept of local control and infringes on our liberty. I also believe that there could be financial hardship for small communities who may not have resources to meet the mandate of the bill. Lastly, the bill is quite disadvantageous to the homeless population who already have enough to deal with. Perhaps the bill could be modified to provide services for people who are on the streets instead of ticketing or locking them up.

Eliza Epstein
Self
Austin, TX

I am all for expanding efforts to make resources available to people in Texas who would like housing support. However, a number of organizations, like Homes not Handcuffs and Austin is Safer When, and people who have been working on this issue

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for far longer than I are vehemently opposed to criminalizing camping.

First, this is a racial equity issue. 35% of people experiencing homelessness in Austin are Black even though Austin residents identified as Black make up approximately 8% of the total population. In Texas and around the country, Black Americans are disproportionately negatively impacted by police interactions, ranging from traffic stops to officer-involved shootings. Banning means enforcement. Enforcement means police. Police means bad things.

Second, there is a lot of talk about safety with this Item and protecting the safety of people living in encampments. I appreciate the state making any efforts to make life safer for people of Texas, but please remain focused on whose safety matters. Here in Austin, during the pandemic, the city shut down streets so that residents in predominantly White neighborhoods could walk more safely. Shutting down a lane of traffic around encampments would make them safer. Paying for running water, providing sanitation stations, delivering food, healthcare, all of these things would make these encampments safer. Banning camping may make you feel more comfortable on your drive home, but it is a lie to argue it makes anyone safer.

Francine Todes

Self

Houston, TX

I support this bill to prohibit camping in public places. I am sympathetic to the homeless population but allowing camping in public places is not the solution. In fact, it is creating an unsanitary situation for the residents of Austin. It seems like having a particular section of the city that would allow camping would be better than to allow anyone to set up camp wherever they want. Can you honestly say allowing this to happen is making Austin a better place to live?

Jeff Mikolajek, Mr.

NAMI Central Texas

Austin, TX

Do not approve this bill! It will be criminalizing people for being homeless! Being homeless is a tragedy, not a crime! If this bill had a home for these people, then it would be good, but there are NO funding for homes for these people ! Thank you!

Susan Spataro

Self

Austin, TX

I support this Bill. I urge members to drive around Austin and look at sites like Manchaca and Ben White, the service road of 183 and Riverside Drive East of IH 35 to see the effects of not having a camping ban. Since the City allowed camping, homelessness has grown, crime has increased, and panhandling has become aggressive and widespread. Downtown Austin has become unsafe and citizens hesitate to frequent businesses and events in the area.

Amy Bleess

Self

San Antonio, TX

I support this bill!

Anthony Bleess

Self

San Antonio, TX

I support this bill.

Austin Hill

Self

Converse, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Amy Jacobs

N/A

Austin, TX

I am a Texas resident and voter writing in vehement opposition to HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday, March 24, 2021. I oppose this bill and all similar bills that would effectively criminalize homelessness. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill and warn you that supporting this bill will result in devastating impacts for all Texas residents (both housed and unhoused), as well as government budgets in suburban and rural communities.

HB 1925 is a shamelessly transparent effort to exploit and increase the population of unhoused Texans in order to generate profits for police unions and the politicians whose pockets they line. This proposed legislation to criminalize rest in public spaces (the last available sources of uncontaminated open air, as a result of the defiantly dumb removal of mask mandates) is not only blatantly cruel and inhumane to the thousands of Texans experiencing homelessness—it is also openly disrespectful to the millions of Texans who have the basic intelligence necessary to understand that jails and prisons provide only temporary shelter.

The threat of criminalization has repeatedly proven to be ineffective at deterring every social ill from drug use to murder, and homelessness is no exception. This is precisely because the criminals responsible for these social ills are not the individuals suffering from them, but the capitalists who fail to provide the taxes, wages and benefits necessary for an equitable society—and the greedy politicians who enable them.

If your public promises to prioritize the well-being of people experiencing homelessness are sincere, you will prioritize housing-first and workforce-first strategies tested and proven by unhoused communities, affordable housing organizations and advocacy groups. Because HB 1925 fails to propose these strategies, you must oppose HB 1925.

Kristy Turner

Safehorns (UT students)

San Antonio, TX

Yes yes yes to this! Our UT students are vulnerable and put themselves at risk every time they walk along Guadalupe Street, stepping over transients and being panhandled by others. It absolutely should be a criminal offense to camp in a public place--beyond the nuisance factor is the very real danger it poses to our young college students. Please pass this!! A huge percentage of UT students live in west campus, which has become a camping mecca.

Jeanne Payne

Self/retired

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Austin, TX

I support the passage of HB 1925.

christina muscato

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925.

Anna Stewart

Self

Amarillo, TX

It feels like there is loitering,safety issues surrounding free for all camping

Leda Ginestra

self

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about houselessness & I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday morning. This bill would cruelly punish people who have no place to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting an ID & arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt the chances of these people from employment opportunities & thus keep them in houseless situations for longer. Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small & mid-sized communities that currently don't have public sleeping bans, & it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If Texas legislators care about reducing houselessness, consider decisions that affect the budgets of suburban & rural local governments, & truly care for the humanity of unhoused people, this bill should not be passed. Thank you.

Nichole Hoang

self, dietary aide

Austin, TX

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. It also hurts folks' chances of getting employment and housing by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records. This bill will actually keep more people homeless longer!

HB 1925 would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. We cannot pass this bill as it prevents the reduction in homelessness, threatens suburban and rural local government budgets, and strips away from the humanity of unhoused people.

Stephanie Carpenter

Self

Texarkana, TX

I support this bill!

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Michael Payne

Self - retired

Austin, TX

This is a state wide problem that requires a state wide solution and needs attention NOW! If it continues to grow it will soon be out of control, if is not now. Money is not the solution is is clear from efforts in Austin where millions have been spent and the number of homeless has doubled in the last year or so. Allowing camping has brought the problem into the open, so to speak. Fix that and you are on the way to a solution.

Alex Meed

Self, cybersecurity analyst

Austin, TX

Chair and members,

I have no idea if you'll receive testimony from Save Austin Now, and I certainly don't know what it would say. If you do get it, though, I would encourage you to read it, as I expect it will unintentionally argue compellingly against this legislation.

Right now, there's a proposition set to be on the ballot about whether to reinstate Austin's former ban on temporarily residing in public with shelter. The election will wrap up before the regular session even ends. Save Austin Now is using the initiative process, which the City Charter allows, and which they have every right to use. Why, then, does the Legislature presume to know better than the people of a city about whether a policy like this one is appropriate? I imagine the attitude towards a "camping ban" would be quite different if it applied to Keller--which, I remind you, the author represents--rather than Austin.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Meed

Ledith Blair

SafeHorns; self, parent of High School & UT students

Dallas, TX

I am concerned about the safety of my children and the community at large. The city council allowing camping in public places has resulted in unsafe and unsanitary conditions around the University of Texas campus and surrounding areas where tens of thousands of students live. Our children and young adults should not have to walk by these outrageous, squalid camp conditions at any time nor should they be taunted or confronted by people camping along sidewalks who openly relieve themselves in plain site, leave human excrement and garbage in walkways, and show complete disregard for the safety of others. This is not a civilized or safe situation for anyone. This "camp anywhere you want" situation needs to be stopped.

Tucker George, Mr

Self

Austin, TX

I support this

Debra Wolgemuth

Self Employed

Waco, TX

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Stop the public homeless encampments from expanding in Texas and creating a criminal offense for those who ignore the law.
Don't San Francisco Our Texas!

Lori Lozano, Entrepreneur

Self

Austin, TX

Hello as a fellow human being and Texas native I believe that HB 1925 will make it illegal to have housing hardship and strive for survival. It is heartbreaking to see that so many have only the choice of camping or the streets. However, having this be a criminal offense will not only put the public further at odds with the police and could lead to violent confrontation. Furthermore, the police do not want to do what a social worker or housing advocate would be so much better at. Most people with the option to live in their own space or a shared space that is safe and secure would choose that instead of skwaler. Please show compassion and do not pass HP 1925. I know a more viable and creative solution must exist. If it does not than we must create it.Thank you for your time.

Katrina Llorente

Self, medical doctor

Austin, TX

Hello,

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill."

If you're opposed to criminalizing people experiencing homelessness, please take five minutes to advocate against it before 8am tomorrow. Thanks thanks thanks!

Luke Robbins

self , retail

Austin, TX

Hello,

I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Allison Billes

Self

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Austin, TX

I am a Texas resident and I strongly oppose HB 1925. This bill would punish unhoused people for existing and create an unnecessary burden financially for these people and the cities forces fk enforce them rather than help. This bill would hurt individuals and help no one.

Eileen Llorente

self, teacher

dripping springs, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Rachel Bush

self, mother

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill

kelsey gibbons

self, PSO

houston, TX

Hello, I am a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they cannot pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt their chances of getting employment and housing and in turn keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill will create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that do not have public sleeping bans today, and it will force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of people experiencing homelessness, you will oppose this bill.

Jill Gura

Self

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Austin, TX

I support this bill! Camping in our city is unsafe, unhealthy and unsanitary. My female UT student is in danger from the transients on drugs and with mental illness wondering around the downtown streets

Qui Alarcon

Self, student

Austin, TX

It seems absolutely ridiculous to me that the state would make it illegal for homeless people to camp in public if it doesn't mean to provide them with homes or social services. So they're supposed to go to jail or be fined for not having homes? Why?

Lisa Dickison

Self, not employed

WACO, TX

I support this bill as unrestricted camping in public places is a danger to the public welfare and the safety and sanitation of these public places.

Stella Prikryl-Martin

self

Austin, TX

This Bill would negatively affect many people in my community, and for that reason I strongly oppose HB 1925. Criminalizing the act of having nowhere else to go will do nothing but worsen the issue of homelessness in this city. Please vote against HB 1925.

Elizabeth Perch

Self

Austin, TX

This is criminalizing a vulnerable population in need. It is a major step in the wrong direction.

Chloe Mantrom

self

Austin, TX

This bill has has the potential to really harm the homeless population across Texas. As someone who has given my Saturdays to helping out my houseless neighbors, I have watched their numbers rise as fast as their anguish, and the amount of food we provide look meeker and meeker. It is not right for the state to criminalize people who are already hurting. I understand that the pandemic has brought the fear of others towards the forefront of our minds, but perhaps opening up the state was the wrong move and so we should not blame the victims of mental illness and poverty for the surges. The only way to combat homelessness is to attack the problem, not the people. Our efforts should be placed in building strong mental health resources, better halfway homes and social workers. It is on us, as fellow Texans, lovers of these lands, to recognize one another and be there for each other.

Holly Sabiston, Ms.

Citizen/self

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Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB1925 on the agenda in state affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government BUDGETS or the HUMANITY of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

P.S. I am writing this directly after a hailstorm which pummeled my area with golf ball and larger sized hail, damaging my car and property. I fear for the people whom I know were sleeping in tents or out in the open just now, some who have work in the morning or children under their care, and also face health, legal, even Covid-19 issues. Until we have robust services and housing ready, this bill will only hurt their chances of overcoming life's challenges.

Nathan Lesch, Mr.

self

Austin, TX

Please vote against this bill. Homelessness is not a crime, rather it is the result of multiple factors and the cure is not handcuffs and jail time but resources and support. Criminalizing camping allows for police to intervene (ie kill or abuse homeless folks). We need to focus our energy and resources on helping homeless folks not hurting them further.

Mayuri Raja

self, software engineer

Austin, TX

I am against this bill. Homeless people aren't trying to be criminals; they have nowhere else to go. By criminalizing camping in public places, you're prioritizing aesthetic over the lives of these people. They have to live somewhere, and Austin housing is super expensive, so there's nowhere for them to really live when they don't have money. Homelessness can happen to anyone, and it must be terrifying to be homeless and know that your city will try to destroy your encampment because of these prohibitions. Please do not let this bill get past committee.

Shannon Flores

N/A

Katy, TX

I OPPOSE this piece of legislation. We need Texas lawmakers to do something that actually makes a difference in the lives of Texans. Texas leads the nation in the number of prisoners, with 149,159 persons behind bars [per an old article, <https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/texas/article/Here-s-how-much-Texas-spends-on-the-average-inmate-11439179.php>].

We do not need to criminalize homelessness with "a criminal offense".

We need to create structures to support struggling Texans and get them the resources they need to leave the street and live in stable housing, most especially during this worldwide pandemic that has put so many out of work and unable to pay their bills.

Our state needs to support others - pass meaningful legislation and create programs to improve their lives. I really love the information about an Austin solution [<https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/these-tiny-houses-can-make-big-difference-austin-s-homeless-n563521>].

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A better use of this committee's time would be to hear bills that create solutions: Increase appropriations funding for HHS which has "Programs for People who are Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless". Expand access to Medicaid to Texans who are financially eligible so that these individuals could access healthcare, including mental health resources. Support grant initiatives to organizations on the ground that work with these individuals.

Lawmakers need to create bills that help these folks who are struggling with homelessness.

Adison Roberts

Self

Houston, TX

House Bill 1925 is a harmful and illogical Bill harming the unhoused population in Texas as well as wasting the resources of small cities and towns who do not yet have anti-camping policies in place. The Bill will displace Texas's unhoused population to different states rather than actually solving any unhoused issues.

Sarai Morales

Self social worker

Dallas, TX

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Linda Horbal, Program Coordinator

Self

Austin, TX

The state legislature has no business legislating a blanket criminalization of homelessness. I'm against this legislation.

Jeannie Nelson

self

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Emi Cisneros

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Self

Austin, TX

This is an extremely inhumane bill to try and pass. Covid has made many more people on the brink of homelessness. Do not pass this bill!

Zakaria Esslaoui

Self training quality lead

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Kirsten Ricketts

Restorer Of City Streets

Onalaska, TX

I am against HB 1925 because it criminalizes being homeless.

Joe Green

Self

Round Rock, TX

This bill is the criminalization of homelessness. It's the criminalization of economic class and/or health status. This bill would jail people simply because of inability to find and maintain stable housing or work due to their circumstances, contributing to the cause of homelessness and not actually stopping it. Instead of diverting tax money and humans lives to an already burdened criminal justice jail system, simply for not having a place to live, solve the problem by working with people that are on the streets to get them proper medical care, stable housing, and job training they need to support themselves. This bill is a superficial attempt to sweep American lives under the rug because of how they live and because some people don't want to have to see the homeless. It is absolutely reprehensible that my tax money go towards the mistreatment of other human beings in my country and in my state. Stop this nonsense and help those that are most desperately in need.

Emily Seales

Open Door and Social worker

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public

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sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Paul Barrett

Self / driver

Austin, TX

My family moved to Austin in 2005. We loved the laid back attitude, friendliness and genuineness of the city.

But it has changed over the years.

Austin Weird used to be fun and frivolous, but now it has become sad and sinister.

Simply put, we just don't feel safe downtown anymore.

I hear and agree that we should not make homelessness illegal. But being homeless and conducting illegal activities are two separate things.

As a community we cannot allow the poor to be below the law.

We must reinstate the camping ban, on a city and state level, so we stop enabling the antisocial and illegal behavior that is driving residents and tourists away from Austin.

Each year we seem to double the taxpayer's homelessness budget while seeing the homeless camps rapidly expand, rather than recede. This is just unacceptable.

Look, I'm all for programs to help homeless people get back on their feet, but I'm not in favor of enabling antisocial behavior.

And that's exactly what we did as a city when we did away with the camping ban.

It's a disgrace, and those who continue to tell our "heroic" police officers to ignore these violations will not be getting my vote in the next elections.

I believe there is a new movement of Austinites who feel the same way as I do, and that group is growing rapidly.

Everyone here today would do well to remember that those people vote too.

We need to clean up our act, and clean up our streets, and impose city and state camping bans.

Thank you

sloan touchet

self, educator

Austin, TX

The Texas House has a duty to draft and enact legislation on behalf of and for the betterment of the state as a whole. The criminalization of camping reprehensibly punishes homeless people for the failings of the Texas government/legislature which create the circumstances for homelessness in the first place! Criminalization is not a solution, homes are. Do your jobs, legislators...for Texas.

Howard Moore

Self - Contractor

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Galveston, TX

This bill appears to be nothing more than an attempt to criminalize homelessness. Incarcerated people only pressure the limited resources of the tax payer and discriminate against those less fortunate. Shame on you!

Joseph Green

Self

Kyle, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Victoria Ramirez

Self

Forney, TX

I am concerned for the homelessness population that this bill will create problems for like give them a criminal record. Where else are they supposed to go? Prison just to make y'all money? Very inhumane if you ask me. You should know better.

Raven Pena, Ms.

Self

San Antonio, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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This is too severe of a law. Don't use our tax dollars to house the unhoused in our jails. This is an inhumane, a frivolous use of our tax dollars, and a totally unnecessary burden on local governance.

Jon Newell

Self

Houston, TX

Camping in a public space should not be criminal

Jason Carr

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Self - Analyst

Austin, TX

I am tired of the on-going issues with homeless camping. I can no longer take my dog to my public neighborhood park because there is a very unstable homeless man that sleeps there and claims its his. He threatens and chases me everytime I go - the whole neighborhood hates this man because he is constantly drunk and trying to fight neighbors that visit the park. He poops in the field and throws his trash everywhere. This has to stop. There are literal camps under the highways, public parks, along lady bird lake, it's disgusting and has a significant impact on the quality of life in Austin. It's gross.

Adrian Metzger

self

Luling, TX

Generally I support this bill. Homelessness has many factors, and they must be addressed for the welfare of our overall community as well as the individuals who are 'unhoused'. However, public camping is certainly not a viable answer for anyone. It only leads to heightened crime and poor sanitation for the community at large and individuals/families currently homeless. It is NOT compassion, but it is turning into big business...

Steven Gilmore, Esq.

National Lawyers Guild of San Antonio

San Antonio, TX

We are a coalition of attorneys and law students in San Antonio opposed to HB 1925. This Bill would create an unconstitutional restriction on movement and possible restraint of liberty for otherwise law-abiding persons with no criminal history and access to the full panoply of constitutional rights. It also, in essence, strips away 4th amendment rights to be free from unlawful searches and seizures for homeless people, whose very existence/presence would be criminalized under this Bill if they remain in any place for any arbitrary period of time to be determined at law enforcement's discretion. For these reasons and more, we oppose this Bill.

Hector Sloss

Self - Volunteer Coordinator

Taylor, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill is counterproductive to a solution to resolve homelessness. Ticketing people that don't have the means to pay does not make sense. Penalizing municipalities by removing the funding that tries to resolve an issue doesn't make sense. This is an inhumane and illogical response to the growing crisis of homelessness.

Mieke Lippstreu, Mrs

Self, retail store employee

Austin, TX

Good day,

I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Thank you for taking the time to heed constituents' calls.

Alicia McElroy

self, Licensed Master Social Worker (TX 61759)

Bridgeport, TX

HB 1925 will do immense damage and harm to the most vulnerable members of our community. Creating charges and fees for people that do not have the means to pay, leading to more individuals in jail or with warrants, and taking away a community's right to handle their citizens through their own processes and approach. This is a disgusting demonstration of "Big Brother State" and you should be ashamed. Let neighbors take care of their neighbors and keep the state's nose out of it.

John bergin

self, artist

austin, TX

The city must do better by our unhoused neighbors instead of criminalizing them for needing a place to sleep!

Madeleine Corum

self, student

Austin, TX

I oppose this cruel bill and support the right of unhoused people to live and sleep where they need to until they are given new housing alternatives.

Bekah Stryker

Self

Georgetown, TX

Do not make being poor a criminal offense. It doesn't help the situation at all, do better Texas!

Linda Mikolajek, Ms.

NAMI central Texas

Austin, TX

I am urging you to NOT SUPPORT HB 1925. That is the state-wide camping ban. If there is no authorization for people to camp or provisions made available; where do they live. Unless we have housing for people, or some other place to put them, this bill criminalizes their homelessness. A great majority of the homeless people have a serious mental illness and many of them do not have the inside to even realize this. They need treatment and not criminalization or jail time. The jails are already filling up with people who are mentally ill and it is a known fact that the jails have become some of the largest attempted Hospitals for those with mental illness. However a jail and the forensic system is not a place to treat someone with a brain disorder. The guards and officers at jails are not trained to properly care for and treat people with serious mental illness. Please Do not approve this HB 1925 Period it's sad that people don't like to LOOK Add people living in dire straits but the answer is not to throw them in jail for breaking the law... A law that is not helping them and their recovery.

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Amanda Sadler

Self

Keller, TX

I am a constituent in Mr. Capriglione's district and I oppose this bill.

Amanda Sadler

Self

Keller, TX

I am a constituent of Mr. Capriglione and I strongly oppose this bill. This bill is punitive, in that it very harshly punished non enforcement. It's also an undefeated mandate, meaning no thought went into logistics. And by separating people from their communities, it's going to worse , no improve, homelessness.

Kevin Kinser, Mr.

Self / Teacher

Fort Worth, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Michelle Edwards

Self, Assistant professor of sociology at Texas State University

Austin, TX

I strongly urge you to top this bill. It absolutely does not reduce homelessness and only makes people who are unhoused more vulnerable and less likely to be able to get off the streets.

Savannah Eldrige, RN

Be Frank 4 Justice

The Woodlands, TX

I STRONGLY oppose HB 1925, because it criminalizes homelessness. I was in Austin yesterday, and I was astonished by the number of, what appeared to be NEW tent cities that have popped up alongside underpasses around the city. The sight of people seeking shelter from the elements of nature, is disheartening, but a reminder that people do what we must to survive. While it is a harsh visual, this bill does not provide a solution to the problem. HB 1925, treats sleeping in public areas, as if people are choosing to display their hardships for all of the world to see in the presence of other viable option, when there aren't very limited resources available. This bill has shotty framework, and leaves too much room for interpretation of the law, because there are other scenarios that could lend a person to sleep in a public area. There was a time when I drove from Corpus Christi to Alice (about 45 min) to work 12-13 hr shifts. Sometimes I would have to pull over at a rest area, and sleep. From my interpretation, that would have been a violation of this bill. Does HB 1925 factor in those areas, and will a permit be require to rest there, to avoid a potential fatality on the road? We know the intended target is the homeless population, but there will be collateral consequences

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for everyone, even those families who like to camp as a hobby. Requiring a permit will only exacerbate problem because one can reasonably conclude that if a person cannot afford a place to stay, they most likely cannot afford a permit to “camp” for the night. It is highly dismissive to propose a piece of legislation without offering alternatives. This bill will lead to overcrowding of local jails , and subsequently create further barriers to the growing issue of housing insecurities for returning citizens, and provides no plan to resolve the problem. In closing, I STRONGLY oppose this any other piece of legislation that criminalizes poverty. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Julia Burkley

self: student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Austin, TX

Hello, I am a Texas Presbyterian Seminary student concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruel punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets, or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. Instead of using police force time and money on policing vulnerable community citizens, we should NOT pass this and instead put money into getting at the root of homelessness and better/more shelters.

Signed,

Julia Burkley

Andrea Pascal

Self - Law student

San Antonio, TX

HB1925 in is inhumane, illogical and illegal. It shouldn't be a crime to have nowhere to go. Broad sleeping bans have been ruled unconstitutional. In *Martin v. Boise, ID*, the court found their sleeping ban "cruel & unusual punishment" under the 8th Amendment. Giving unhoused people tickets they can't pay become warrants that stop them from getting IDs & arrests that go on their record - hurting their ability to get housing and furthering their daily inequitable access to basic necessities. If you make something people can't avoid doing into a crime, then you've made their very existence against the law. This bill is cruel and wasteful.

Gloria Mills

Self, retired non-profit executive director

Austin, TX

I oppose HB 1925 as bad public policy. This bill provides NO solution to the issue of public camping becoming by necessity the “housing” option to a growing population of “poor” people in Texas. The bill penalizes those already WITHOUT funds for housing and “criminalizes” their reaction to the lack of good public policy to provide appropriate housing solutions by fining them money that public officials already know they do not possess. Unfortunately, given the cost of housing in particular, the cost of living in general, and the pandemic too many Texans are one paycheck (or less) away from homelessness (perhaps John Paul DeJoria's experience would enlighten the committee about this reality). Good public policy should fight poverty NOT the poor. I ask the committee to oppose HB 1925.

Jene Flood

UT Safehorns

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Dallas, TX

Please make UT safe again, for our students sake!!

Candace Castillo

self

San Antonio, TX

This is a bill that will do much more harm than good for our community. Our court and prison systems are already clogged and creating a criminal offense for camping in a public place will further add to this problem. In addition, this bill will harm folks who are already enduring a lot of hardship and in many cases suffering as they are experiencing homelessness. Where should these folks go? Are they supposed to never catch a wink of sleep if they do not have a home and a bed to lay their head on at night? This bill will further exasperate the inhumane treatment folks who are struggling in our community receive from a government that is supposed to care for its citizens. Instead we should be looking at the root causes of homelessness in our community and work to target the problem there.

Victoria Nassif

Self, Actor

Austin, TX

I'm writing to voice my strong opposition to this bill. Criminalizing poverty and homelessness does not solve the problem, it worsens it. No one wants to be homeless. Camping in public places is not a choice, it is a necessity. We must work to help the campers, not criminalize their basic survival.

Robin Bartee

self

Austin, TX

My daughter will be living in West Campus the next 4 years while she is at UT. She will not be safe if the homeless are able live near the area. Some of them are mentally unstable or drunk, are carrying knives legally, and following college girls as they pass by. Our city needs to do a better job protecting these students.

Craig Nazor, Dr.

Conservation Chair, Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club

Austin, TX

Homelessness is a difficult and persistent problem that we, as a society, should do better to address. I do not believe this bill will help to address the problem. Homeless people will not voluntarily surrender themselves to a shelter (or a jail!) because this bill is passed. Experience has clearly shown that they will hide in the most remote places they can find, which is in our (Austin's) parks and greenbelts. They will dump their trash there, and they will pollute our creeks with human waste. It will be more difficult to get services to them in times of need (such as pandemics or extreme cold and heat spells). Much of the cleanup will be done by volunteers (I have spent hundreds of hours of volunteer time cleaning creeks and greenbelts). Walnut Creek in north Austin, one of our largest creeks (and lined with beautiful parks), is out of compliance with the Clean Water Act. Austin has spent millions of dollars to clean it up, but if we begin to fall backward, we will have to pay fines. Let's fix the homeless problem. This bill, unfortunately, will not do this. It will make things worse for the homeless, cost more money, and in the long run, make Austin a far less attractive and affordable city in which to live.

KHALEAH MALLORY

Self

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Austin, TX

I am a Texan concerned with Homelessness and oppose the bill HB 1925 as it is an attack against these communities. It is not only classist but egregious. This bill shows that Texas does not care for the residents that aren't fortunate enough to maintain housing. If these people can't pay for housing, a bill should be put into place where we can help these individuals. Instead you're proposing to violate their only means of "home" and give them tickets that they can't pay. If you care about the humanity of the unhoused you will oppose this bill.

Thomas Flood

Self

Dallas, TX

Our kids need to be safe and feel safe while walking on campus or west campus!!

Sandra Allen

Self

Austin, TX

Please ban camping in unrestricted areas.

Chris Davis

Ending Community Homelessness Coalition

Austin, TX

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), the Continuum of Care lead agency in Austin/Travis County responsible for planning and implementing community-wide strategies to end homelessness, opposes HB 1925 for the following reasons:

A ban on camping is not part of any strategy to end homelessness. Preventing people from sleeping in public won't help them find housing; it'll just further ostracize them from our community because they can't afford rent. Evidence shows that, far from ending anyone's homelessness, criminalizing basic human functions like sleeping makes it harder for someone to end their homelessness. Research shows penalizing someone for meeting their basic needs in public when they have nowhere else to go increases the trauma associated with experiencing homelessness and extends the amount of time a person remains unhoused. Even minor citations can lead to arrest warrants, which can and does bar people from being able to pass an apartment background check. Criminalizing acts of survival actively makes it more difficult to end homelessness.

No one wants to see our neighbors forced to sleep in tents on the sidewalk, and we must push for a racially equitable solution that both helps people who have nowhere else to go and keeps our shared public spaces welcoming for everyone. That solution is to house, not hide our neighbors. Our community, like others across the state, is short thousands of units of permanent housing and emergency shelter that would help end this crisis; but until we're able to scale up resources to meet the need in an equitable way, ticketing or arresting people for sleeping or sitting down does nothing but hide people from view, traumatize them further, and extend people's episodes of unsheltered homelessness.

Homelessness is a crisis because it can happen to anyone. COVID-19 has shown just how thin a thread many of us are hanging onto, with our jobs, our healthcare, our support networks. We need a solution that works for all Austinites and all Texans, not just ones who are privileged enough to have safe affordable housing.

Mozelle Moreno

Self

San Antonio, TX

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HB 1925 is inhumane and dangerous for houseless individuals. This bill would be criminalizing individuals who are vulnerable and in need of resources. Homelessness should not be a crime.

Kraig Blaize-Fiero

Self

Austin, TX

The criminalization of the poor, through the criminalization of living outside, is misguided public policy. Needlessly pushing homeless individuals into the criminal justice system does nothing to break the cycle of poverty or prevent homelessness in the future. Homelessness is caused by a failure of safety nets, that the criminal justice system is not able to nor are they the appropriate actors to adequately address. Enforcing this law would be onerous to local government and law enforcement and costly to taxpayers.

Velma Rice, Mrs

Self

Houston, TX

Script

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Deanne Lock

Self

Austin, TX

This bill seeks to hide people living outside from the immediate view of housed Texans rather than do what actually addresses homelessness – invest more in housing and supportive services.

This bill is not only prioritizing the least effective response to homelessness; it's encouraging cities and counties to designate areas approved by state officers or agencies where Texans experiencing homeless may legally reside. This effectively further segregates people living outside from the rest of the community. The consequences of this bill will negatively impact the most marginalized and oppressed among us.

Additionally, it is unconstitutional to criminalize people experiencing homelessness if they have no other options. In 2017, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals effectively created a constitutional right to live outside in their ruling on Martin vs. City of Boise, stating that people cannot be prevented from living outside until there are enough shelter beds for everyone. The City of Boise appealed this decision, and in 2020, the Supreme Court denied a petition to review the case, upholding the 9th Circuit's decision. Should the Texas State Legislature pass this bill, they are risking wasting millions of tax dollars in suits.

The criminalization of the poor, through the criminalization of living outside, is misguided public policy. Needlessly pushing homeless individuals into the criminal justice system does nothing to break the cycle of poverty or prevent homelessness in the future. Homelessness is caused by a failure of safety nets, that the criminal justice system is not able to nor are they the appropriate actors to adequately address. Enforcing this law would be onerous to local government and law enforcement and

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costly to taxpayers.

Texas Homeless Network supports promotion and investment in housing, such as through housing projects with a Housing First focus or an expansion of Housing Choice Vouchers. Housing is proven to be the most cost-effective and humane method to end homelessness. Rather than build systems to further exclude Texans, we should engage in constructive conversation about solutions and push for robust investment in actual solutions. Ultimately, that's the only way communities have succeeded in making homelessness rare, brief, and a one-time event.

Karen Page

Retired

San Angelo, TX

HB 1925 is inhumane, illogical and illegal. It shouldn't be a crime to have nowhere to go. Please State Affairs Committee members -Vote NO!

Gillian Flood

n/a

Austin, TX

The homeless people camping near our university campus and in the city are threatening our safety and the general cleanliness of Austin.

Irit Umani

Trinity Center At St Davids Episcopal Church

Austin, TX

Why don't you come up with the funds to HOUSE all these people, rather than just tell them where they cannot be. Shame on you. I am contacting in in strong opposition to this cruel and unjust legislation.

priya fink

self, musician

Bellaire, TX

Please do not support this bill!

Leia Atkinson

Self - Eviction Prevention Specialist

Denton, TX

Experiencing homelessness is not a crime. People experiencing homelessness are victims of the state, not enemies of the state.

Christina Lazutkin

Self, college student

PLANO, TX

What kind of cruel unfunded mandate is HB 1925? You really want to go around prosecuting a bunch of people who can't afford housing, and force them to pay fines or go to prison instead of helping them get a place to live? Who will you be making enforce

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these laws? What do you feel like this will accomplish? A bill like HB 1925 isn't going to get rid of the "unsightly homeless," but it will definitely help send more of the Texan population through the prison system and overload the already-overextended police forces. Is this worth it, especially during a time when many people have lost their jobs? And is it really worth sending homeless people to prison for a crime as stupid as "sleeping in public"? Or putting up a tent in public? If this is really an unacceptable social crisis, how about you address it at the root instead of criminalizing every symptom? Vote down this evil bill, we don't need to treat the most mistreated people in society with even more indignity!

Tara Sinicropi

Self

Austin, TX

As a citizen with the privilege of access to education, shelter, and time, it is my duty to speak up for those who are unable to, so please hear me. HB 1925 will cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By burdening unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting IDs, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt many people's chances of getting employment and housing. Criminalizing homelessness actually keeps more people homeless for longer. Please use empathy and your humanity to oppose HB 1925.

Virginia Davis

Self student

San Marcos, TX

Hi! Homelessness is not an issue that has come from nowhere. The amount of people on the streets directly correlates to the policies and legislation that Texas has upheld. It is a direct representation of the failures of our representatives to protect our citizens. Where do these people go when there is little to no support systems in place to help them? Where do these people go when the people that are sworn to protect them are trying to criminalize likely the hardest thing they ever have had to do (be homeless). For many, not having a home is not a choice. If you were able to choose, would you be living on the street unsure of where your next meal would come from? I don't think anyone would choose that for themselves. Texans will stand up for what is right whether or not our leaders will stand with us. Please reconsider this bill and find another way to solve the problems we see in our state.

Jill Salinaro, Mrs

Self/all UT Students

Dallas, TX

Camping is out of control in Austin. I walked around Town Lake which was loaded with trash on the shores from homeless camping. These campers can be very mean and aggressive while passing by their tents. They camp between buildings in West campus making it very difficult for students to feel safe and have a normal college experience. These campers are aggressive and dangerous to the students too. The city has become filthy. I have had 3 children attend UT in Austin. The situation in Austin is out of control with the camping and homeless situation. Austin, please protect your students and citizens!

Preston Maness

self, Software Engineer, Austin DSA member

Austin, TX

I am an Austin Texas resident. We're presently facing a local Proposition on this same matter, Prop B. Criminalizing homelessness does not solve homelessness. It is a cruel and callous attempt to sweep the problem under the rug. It is just as expensive, if not more so, than taking a housing-first approach. It sets us up for a collision course with the 9th circuit's precedent on this matter that will cost us millions in litigation. I urge our elected officials to reject this bill, if for no other reason than the supposed conservative doctrine of leaving decisions like this to localities.

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Sara Gore

Self - software analyst

AUSTIN, TX

Until 2019 Austin had a criminal offense on sitting and lying in a public place. We know from experience that did nothing to make residents, including the unhoused, safer, nor did it stop panhandling or make the city cleaner. It just made the problem of rampant homelessness more diffuse and difficult to address. While existing camp sites under freeways are not safe, the living conditions of our unhoused neighbors at the time were much less safe. Before, they were camping in creekbeds and dumpsters and women in particular reported more assaults. It is also harder to connect people with services that they need if they are constantly on the move. This is why all of the homeless advocacy groups in Austin such as Mobile Loaves and Fishes opposes criminalizing homelessness through tickets and fines. It is both inhumane and impractical. We know from long experience that the only solution is housing and that sit and lie laws like this one exacerbate the situation.

Roshni Lebouef

Self

Richardson, TX

I oppose this bill. Please help our neighbors on the streets without punishing them for their circumstances.

Kari Rector

Self

Richardson, TX

I support this

Ashley Brundage, Executive Director of Housing Stability and Senior Vice President of Community Impact

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas

Dallas, TX

Chairman Paddie, Vice-Chair Hernandez, and Members of the State Affairs Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to submit public comments on House Bill 1925. United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (UWMD) is concerned about the implications of HB 1925 because criminalization is the most expensive and least effective way of addressing homelessness. HB 1925 would criminalize persons experiencing homelessness which will cause a criminal record and do more harm in the long run, rather than providing for an actual solution to homelessness, such as housing. A person can't access housing vouchers or decent housing with a criminal background; they are also barred from some employment options.

Enforcing this law would be onerous to local government and law enforcement and costly to taxpayers. The criminalization of the poor, through the criminalization of living outside, is ill-advised and does nothing to break the cycle of poverty or prevent homelessness in the future. Homelessness is caused by a failure of safety nets, that the criminal justice system is not able to nor are they the appropriate actors to adequately address.

It is unconstitutional to criminalize people experiencing homelessness if they have no other options. In 2017, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals effectively created a constitutional right to live outside in their ruling on Martin vs. City of Boise, stating that people cannot be prevented from living outside until there are enough shelter beds for everyone. The City of Boise appealed this decision, and in 2020, the Supreme Court denied a petition to review the case, upholding the 9th Circuit's decision.

The Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance, the lead agency for the homeless response system in Dallas and Collin Counties, is seeing an average of 160 new people enter the homeless system each month since Jan. 2020. In Dallas County, over 40% of families are employed but are not financially stable. More than 15% of households spend 50% or more of their household income on housing.

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Also, 47% of North Texas households do not have any money set aside for emergencies.

UWMD is committed to building a community where everyone, regardless of race or personal circumstances, has the access and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Research shows that increasing access to affordable housing is the most cost-effective way to reduce homelessness, intergenerational poverty, and increase economic mobility. Without a house, a child cannot get a good night's sleep or have a quiet place to study, and a person cannot shower for a job interview and will have a hard time keeping a job. UWMD supports promotion and investment in housing, such as housing projects with a Housing First focus and an expansion of Housing Choice Vouchers.

Housing is proven to be the most cost-effective and humane method to end homelessness. We need real solutions, not additional obstacles to help ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Genevieve Poist

Self - Writer & Musician

Austin, TX

As an Austin resident I firmly oppose the criminalization of camping on public land. This measure directly criminalizes homelessness and will make life even more difficult for the residents the city already chooses to ignore and has failed thus far to help. This measure prioritizes the interests of wealthy residents and stakeholders over those most in need and seeks merely to hide a problem that is not at all being adequately addressed. The city should waste no more time debating the legality of sheltering and camping on public land and should instead focus all of its energy, time, and resources in this arena to providing shelter and support to its houseless population. "Out of sight, out mind" is a devil's adage.

Heidi Sloan

Homes Not Handcuffs

Austin, TX

Having work alongside people experiencing chronic homelessness for the last 8 years, I know for certain that prohibiting camping keeps people from exiting homelessness. People who are ticketed, fined or jailed for trying to survive in a state where affordable housing is so very limited are unable to maintain their appointments, unable to keep their place on housing waitlists, unable to meet with their caseworkers, unable to continue working and unable to keep in touch with family members. These prohibitions just keep people moving from place to place or make them dependent on the carceral state rather than allowing them to heal and become more productive and engaged citizens. These prohibitions are incredibly costly and divert the limited funds of Texas municipalities away from housing and services, which actually do decrease homelessness. These prohibitions are also unconstitutional and infringe on both personal liberties and human rights.

Nathan Graves

Self

Round Rock, TX

I am entirely against this unfunded mandate to our small communities. Police departments have enough to do without driving homeless people out of sight. This is a solution in search of a problem, and a bad one at that.

Nick Thompson

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925. Let's focus on housing solutions not further criminalization of the most oppressed in society.

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Elaina Gonzales
self, Music Content Specialist
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. I do not believe that we should ban public camping. Many people lost their jobs and homes to the pandemic. This would be extremely harmful to those in need.

Kali Sime
Self
Austin, TX

This is immoral and as a citizen of Austin, I refuse to accept this proposal. Houseless individuals deserve resources, not more policing. Criminalizing people who are already vulnerable/ have no where else to go, is beyond cruel. Our resources should be allocated to providing housing, mental health counseling, substance abuse rehabilitation, education and more to make the quality of everyone's lives better. People who are houseless are not criminals, they are just trying to survive with the resources they have.

Jeana Nam
Self, counselor
Houston, TX

I oppose HB 1925 and all policies that criminalize poverty and homelessness. Bills like HB 1925 treat our houseless neighbors like problems to be solved rather than people who need support.

Lovinah Igbani
Self
Houston, TX

This bill should NOT pass as it would criminalize marginalized people.

Anna Lacey
Self
El Paso, TX

Attempting to make this bill into law will further isolate and hurt vulnerable persons living in homelessness. It is a pretentious funding source that ignores the environmental and systematic issues that create extreme relative poverty in the first place. For people who are staying in places or sleeping in places not meant for habitation...this would be disastrous. Spending time in jail due to the inability to pay court fees and bail...for a predatory law. Jail, warrants, the label of parole that is already difficult to obtain fair work with...the harm is endless. We should be focused on HUD programs, shelters, and rebuilding the systematic issues that bring about the issue in the first place.

Tiffany Roma
Self -project manager
Austin, TX

Oppose! This type of law is dehumanizing and simply feeds the prison industrial complex. Houseless neighbors are people and camping should not be illegal. Rather the money that would do to enforcing such a ridiculous order should be allocated for mental

health and community building services and programming or even a houseless living facilities.

Stephanie Segura

self

Austin, TX

Mayor Steve Adler and the city council have ruined Austin by inviting homeless people from all over the country to camp anywhere in the city. There is trash everywhere despite the fact the city has provided trash cans. They wander into traffic, block roadways, aggressively panhandle, and have taken over our once beautiful parks and gazebos. My husband has seen people defecating in the street. I have seen someone urinate while driving by on William Cannon and people have reported seeing people having sexual intercourse on the side of the road. I have also seen many people walking around obviously very intoxicated, high or having delusions due to mental illness. These are not people who have simply lost their home due to financial issues. Those people usually have friends, family or some means to get help or support and certainly aren't squatting in a park or sidewalk. There has also not been thousands of these "campers" living in the woods all this time that are finally able to be seen to get help here in the middle of the public. Why aren't we criminalizing drug use, theft, assault, littering, starting fires, public intoxication, exposing genitals, urinating/defecating in public etc... Are these things no longer illegal? Police here aren't allowed to do anything and our safety has become a huge concern for many Austinites. I hope you will pass a law to outlaw camping in public areas, stop allowing people to aggressively panhandle and make it harder to live this way in the hopes that they will be forced to make a change. Letting people live like this is cruel. It also is a public health emergency. What about the environmental impact? Thank you for reading this.

Wei Luty

SafeHorn

League City, TX

Please do this, save Austin!

Rosey Armstrong

Self

Austin, TX

I am a Texan and I'm concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in state affairs Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having no where else to go. These are humans. Have a heart.

Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting id and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity if unhoused people you'll oppose this bill.

Julia Von Alexander

Self, Policy Analyst

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925. HB 1925 would criminalize sleeping in public, force more people into debt and incarceration, and restrict the decision-making of local government to choose a humane approach to solving the state's housing crisis. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Also, by giving unhoused people tickets they can't pay, warrants that

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prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt people's chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. This bill also brings potential legal challenges after Supreme Court let the Ninth Circuit court's decision stand in *Martin v Boise*. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local government budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill. Thank you.

Collin Lawrence

Self, State of Texas public servant.

Austin, TX

I am a Texan who vehemently opposes the passing of HB 1925, on the grounds of protecting our unhoused neighbors who are being wrongfully and egregiously targeted by lawmakers who would desperately rather pretend unhoused folk don't exist. Not only is this bill shockingly dehumanizing, it's also insidious in its aims and poses as a facile "solution" to a symptom of the real, much more complex problems at hand: healthcare and housing in Texas.

This bill must not pass, our unhoused neighbors must not be punished for the failures of our lawmakers.

~ A very concerned Texan

Karen Page

Retired

San Angelo, TX

This is a BAD bill, please don't let it go any further. The definition of 'public places' is very unclear and would prevent the citizen of Texas to have access to camping. **WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE CRIMINAL OFFENSE BILLS TO BE APPROVED.** Thank you for your service to the State of Texas.

Erin Daggs

Self

Krum, TX

Instead of providing pathways out of homelessness, this bill will continue to keep persons dependent and trapped in poverty. If citizens cannot pay to stay in a motel or the shelters are full, many homeless persons resort to surviving on the street. We do nothing for them as a government by providing them with expensive fines they cannot pay and charging a misdemeanor on their record. Please realize that this will do nothing to prevent people from living and taking up space in public where they have no other options. Texas has a housing crisis, and on top of the effects of Covid-19 and loss of many jobs, we now have a large majority of middle class as well as lower class Americans struggling to stay sheltered. If you don't like it, provide more money to shelters and organizations that house and feed people.

Sandy Ramirez

Self

Austin, TX

Taxpayers like myself deserve better. Camping is NOT housing!!

Katherine Soupiset

Self, student

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San Antonio, TX

This bill is criminalizing homelessness and seeks to harm our community members who are unable to access safe and affordable housing. Oppose this bill!

Blake Jacob

Myself

Fort Worth, TX

Stop trying to criminalize poverty. You've already failed them by not providing enough infrastructure to take care of our homeless population, but you want to kick them while they're down and throw them in jail. And for WHAT?! Property values? Especially during a time when people are being evicted from their homes after losing their job because of the pandemic. Do you care about the people that live here at all?

Kimberly Tansey

Self

Fort Worth, TX

This bill is atrocious, it directly contributes to the prison pipeline and creates fines that our homeless population won't be able to pay off on their own. Instead of making it illegal to sleep on the street a better idea would be to provide support for our homeless population with more shelters and more programs to help them get jobs or a place to live. This would alleviate anyone's problem about a homeless person sleeping on the street because there would be less homeless people on the street. The idea that we must punish our homeless population in order to have a "prettier city" is a capitalistic idea. How is this not similar to debtors prison. Those people were also being punished for being poor. We repeat mistakes of the past by not learning how those mistakes happen. And by doing so we are doomed to repeat the past.

Chloe Malek

Self, architectural designer

Austin, TX

In addition to being morally repugnant, criminalizing homelessness is ineffective, and costs more money than solving the problem by ensuring access to housing. This is potentially unconstitutional, wastes precious public funds, and makes it harder for people to exit homelessness by saddling them with criminal records. This bill is clearly not intended to address any of the complex issues exacerbating homelessness in our communities. It provides no solutions to assist Texans experiencing homelessness and its disingenuous wording does little to hide that the proponents of this legislation only want homeless people out of sight for those who have been more fortunate.

Denise Hernández

Self

San Antonio, TX

Until our abhorrent state government advocates and supplements local governments with the appropriate measures, funding, and policy for Housing First models then this bill is just an attack on our most vulnerable neighbors. Sleeping in public is not a crime. Folks seeking refuge and shelter when they have relatively no other option is not a crime. Existing with a mental health problem is not a crime. Living with an addiction is not a crime. People need public safety in the form of accessible, free healthcare, mental healthcare and safe, affordable housing. Further criminalizing poverty is abhorrent, let alone not Christ-like.

John Sayers

Self

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Austin, TX

Please restore uniform law and order to Tx. Laws must apply to all, uniformly. Not conditionally. Please stop allowing misguided camping experiments that endanger everyone to continue. Ban public camping. It is unsafe and unjust for all.

"Criminalizing homelessness" is clever, twisted, propaganda terminology. A lie.

"Help" is not condoning crime based on socioeconomic position. No rules or order for some, is not ever a civil solution.

Allowing trashing of the city and environment, assaults, public indecency, public urination & defecation, property damage, business loss and theft without any personal responsibility is not compassionate, or civil. Allowing 2 rules books for all basic laws is reckless and likely unconstitutional. Our real homeless benefit none by blind-eye policy.

"Camping" is also a twisted term. When society "camps", it is a day or few. A private home on public land is illegal for all, not just some. Campgrounds are designed for camping, not dangerous streets and medians.

Addicts need help not ignoring, nor coddling. The ill need help, not ignoring. The true homeless want a path to job and home, and rarely are camping in tents on a road, seeking daily handouts for life. They get to the help that is available and reboot as quickly as possible. Austin is an example of chaos and City Council should be held liable for wilful misconduct and reckless endangerment of all citizens, with or without a home.

Care and compassion is not via anarchy but rules and order. Every kid knows of rules and consequences yet adults seem to have lost comprehension of that. Tax payers are being robbed literally and figuratively by politicians who enable lawlessness. Misguided, shortsighted, reckless, unjust and harmful for all. Enough is enough.

Sara Geiger

self

Kingwood, TX

Prohibiting camping/ sleeping in a public place is extremely harmful to our unhoused neighbors and presents them with another obstacle to getting on their feet. Please do not pass this bill!

Jill Clay

Safehorns

Fort Worth, TX

I support this Bill due to the effect I have seen near UT campus in Austin. Thank you.

dena shahri

self and student

galveston, TX

i am against this bill.

Will Hyatt, VP

Housethehomeless.org

Austin, TX

assessment directing each individual to the best setting that would lead to their success and sustainability. Remote distant camps in the country are another solid option appealing to some of those suffering from PTSD and other disorders that might encourage

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their dream setting. They would need transportation options to help as well as opportunities on site for gardening or other productive engagement. The list of ideas is very long and there are solutions that can be implemented to help bring options to the people who need to move from the public right of ways. HTH would like to present those viable options to some of the summit gatherings that are taking place right now with more of the deciders being unhoused leaders , nonprofits and churches. There are a lot of intelligent people interested in helping with this issue and we believe this solutions-based approach needs to start from the bottom up. The people directly being affected need to have a bigger voice in the decisions being made so that they can pursue their dreams with some limited assistance. Unhoused people who have legitimate disabilities need to have a stipend that can help them live in an affordable housing setting. The people that can work and need to are going to require assistance in getting that option moving productively. We have comprehensive plans that can really help move this entire agenda the way it should be moved with people helping people find the answers that will lead to viable solutions and address the crisis we currently have on our hands. One important factor to consider is these numbers are increasing. We all need to work together to solve this crisis with love and understanding!! Blessing!

Meagan Knuth

Self, Paralegal

San Antonio, TX

Stop criminalizing homelessness!!!! Do more to provide assistance instead of taking away what little they have and trying to overwhelm our jails and prisons that are already overcrowded. Vote against HB 1925. It is an unethical and heartless proposition

simone kruger

self

austin, TX

Do not follow through with this. It's not humane or the correct way to handle the issue of homelessness. It shouldn't be illegal for people to sleep when they can't afford shelter. Instead of criminalizing the homeless, find ways to help.

Amite Dominick, Dr.

Texas Prison Air Conditioning Advocates

Rockport, TX

I am AGANIST this bill. This bill limits the authority of local municipalities, has no compassion, and infringes on human rights of freedom. It also unnecessarily penalizes American Citizens.

Cristian Díaz

Self; student and essential worker

Dallas, TX

Terrible and inhumane. Instead of criminalizing the homeless we should be finding ways to pull them out of poverty.

Caleb Pillado Leon

Self - Engineer

Katy, TX

Is the Texas Capitol lawn a public place? I support prohibiting camping in public places. Austin is a mess with tents in many places. Our capital is being destroyed. I would urge the committee members to consider their street (that is public place) when voting for this bill.

Rafika Islam

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Self, Student Worker

San Antonio, TX

Implementing this bill will not help the increasing rate of homelessness in the state. With this passed, homeless people will get charged with fines that they cannot pay and therefore they will receive more fines which lessen their chance to get back up and seek employment. We need to remember that these people are citizens and they aren't camping on public place because of choice. They are camping out there to survive.

Teresa Pillado

self Teacher

Katy, TX

I am in favor of HB 1925 because I care deeply for our most vulnerable populations. By allowing camping, the cities are encouraging child trafficking to continue. Our government should be supporting churches in the local area to walk besides these vulnerable people so they will not continue to be victims of violent crime and rape in camps.

Chris Harris

Texas Appleseed

Austin, TX

Texas Appleseed opposes this bill because it effectively criminalizes the status of homelessness, is counter-productive to the goal of reducing homelessness and is very likely unconstitutional. Particularly given that the bill criminalizes the unavoidable act of "sleeping", it makes people experiencing homelessness very existence against the law, which we believe is inhumane. By ticketing people unlikely to have the ability to pay, many of these tickets will likely turn into warrants, which restrict people's ability to get state ID. Warrants also turn into arrests and jail time which, coupled with the lack of ID, cripple people's ability to get housing and employment, threatening to prolong people's status of homelessness. Courts have repeatedly struck down laws that criminalize unavoidable acts related to the status of an individual rather than their behavior. Most recently, a Boise, ID law that outlawed sleeping was ruled in violation of the Constitution's 8th Amendment prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishment."

While we laud the bill author's stated concern for the welfare of people experiencing homelessness, this bill doesn't in any way provide resources to improve their welfare. It only criminalizes their unavoidable behavior and ultimately hurts them. While surely the visible presence of homelessness is disturbing and unfortunate, the only alternative being offered by this bill is jail. While the bill author states that the intent is to spur action by local govts to address homelessness, the biggest financial commitments toward addressing homelessness by the City of Austin have occurred since camping was decriminalized. In fact, it was the visibility of homelessness that has spurred action, not hiding the problem through criminalization.

Finally, its important to understand that many cities do not have camping bans currently and this bill's requirement that they begin to enforce one represents a potentially large unfunded mandate. The recension of all state grant funds for entities deemed to not adequately enforce this ban would further harm local budgets, especially for the small and mid-size communities more reliant on state grant funding and less likely to be enforcing sleeping bans today for whom this would create a new task for their law enforcement.

Becky Morris

self/retired 37 year Air Force Civil Servant

San Angelo, TX

So, do we think the answer to homelessness is to arrest and continue to overcrowd the county jails and Texas prisons with people who have no place to lay their head at night. Have you ever thought that any of us are one step away from being homeless. One accident while texting - killing someone and being arrested, sent to prison and released with no ability to acquire housing. Leaving a party after just one too many and having a wreck or getting arrested - could lose everything. Even those of us who

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have a steady and stable means of making a living could see something happen to take that living away. The pandemic surely has shown that to be the case. Maybe no family to help us - no room in any halfway house - homeless shelters that just let you have one night. I am not saying camping in the streets is the answer - the problem is so much bigger than that. We must do something about the mental health issues which abound, the changes needed to allow people who have paid their debt to society to find housing and obtain jobs, and drug and alcohol abuse. Please Texas Representatives, have compassion - this could be you or any member of your family - even if you don't believe this. We cannot make sleeping in the street a crime!! We have to find answers to the root causes.

Sonja Burns

Self

Austin, TX

I am writing in opposition of HB 1925. This does not solve the humanitarian crisis that is playing out in our streets and in our jails. We must invest in housing, and access to services and supports so that people can be successfully housed - not in our streets. In Austin, Integral Care received funding from the Healthy Communities Collaborative Grant to create the Terrace at Oak Springs - a housing initiative to house 50 people who have experienced chronic homelessness (25 of whom are veterans). At the one year anniversary of this project (11/20), Integral Care did not plan to renew the leases of several the tenants due to the "inability to meet the requirements of the lease" (this did not include ability to pay) - and they admitted that one person would be returning to homelessness (thankfully ECHO appealed on this person's behalf and the eviction did not happen during a time evictions were not to take place due to COVID). Our legislature gives a significant amount of money to Local Mental Health Authorities to provide services to people in need of mental and behavioral health services, with very little accountability for whether or not these services are being provided or outcomes of these services. Our state hospital system does NOT address substance use disorder (SUD), though most of the people coming through the system (70%) have the comorbidity of SUD. Just like jails and prisons, our state hospitals and psychiatric facilities discharge many people to homelessness. This bill does not offer any solutions - criminalizing homelessness only perpetuates homelessness. I will be happy to sign on to a bill that offers real solutions- and I hope to work with all of you toward this goal. HB 1925 does nothing to improve the lives of our unsheltered community members, nor does it improve public safety. These same people will come out of jail only to experience the same circumstance - homelessness. Where will they go? And now we have created more barriers to housing due to criminal justice involvement. Let's work together to solve this social issue in a meaningful way. HB 1925 does not do this. I look forward to future collaboration - thank you ALL for ALL you do! -sonja

Zenobia Joseph, U.S. Citizen

Self

Austin, TX

Against HB 1925

1. Statutory Authority: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 “prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in federally-funded programs or activities.” November 3, 2020 Austin voters approved \$7.1B Project Connect light rail—predicated on 45% Federal funding and “equity” propaganda. Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 prohibits use of public funds for propaganda. Blacks wait 60 minutes bus in Northeast Austin as South/West/Central whites enjoy 6-15 minutes.

2. Title VI Disparate Impact: “Austin is [the] Most Economically Segregated Metro Area” (Texas Tribune, 2015). “Although the Black population makes up 8% of the total Travis County population, 35% of the homeless population identify as Black, which indicates a high level of disproportionality (i.e., the rate of homelessness for Blacks is 4.4 times greater than what one would expect given racial/ethnic composition of Austin/Travis County)” per Community Advancement Network 2019 Report (p. 7). To where would Rep. Capriglione and privileged white Downtown Austin Alliance members have Blacks live in Austin without public transportation to access jobs, in part, on FM 734/Parmer Lane—Samsung to Apple, Applied Materials, 3 HEBS, and East Village 425-acre development (construction site)?

3. Fair Housing Act of 1968 Disparate Impact Violation: Highland Village is the former Home for Negro Orphans—later Highland Mall. Now, Austin Community College-Highland mixed-use development includes Jacob Fontaine Plaza and streets named for Blacks, including Wilhelmina Delco—first Black elected official in Austin, later Texas House of Representatives 10-

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term member—but 80% area median income (“AMI”) excludes Blacks! The same is true for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (“LIHTC”) sites west of Loop 1/MoPac, often requiring 80% AMI (\$54,700). June 23, 2016 Austin Chronicle disaggregated salary by race. Blacks earned \$50,820, Latino (\$43,198) while white (\$97,939) and Asian families (\$101,699) earned twice as much. Per Travis County, “Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area Fiscal Year 2020 Median Family Income = \$97,600.” In November 2020, Austin reported Blacks earn (\$42,422), Hispanics (\$50,332). 80% AMI equates to redlining by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, “the first in the nation” public housing authority formed in 1937.

4. HB 1925 Funding Penalty: “Sec. 364.004. DENIAL OF STATE GRANT FUNDS. (a) A local entity may not receive state grant funds, and state grant funds for the local entity shall be denied, for the state fiscal year following the year in which a final judicial determination in an action brought under Section 364.003 is made that the entity has intentionally violated Section 364.002.” HB 1925 knowingly creates disparate impacts against African-Americans who are disproportionately homeless. This in turn could, ultimately, jeopardize the state’s Federal funding and Project Connect! Kill HB 1925 in Committee. Thanks!

Zenobia Joseph, U.S. Citizen

Self

Austin, TX

Against HB 1925_ *Correction

1. Statutory Authority: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 “prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in federally-funded programs or activities.” November 3, 2020 Austin voters approved \$7.1B Project Connect light rail—predicated on 45% Federal funding and “equity” propaganda. Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 prohibits use of public funds for propaganda. *Northeast Austin Blacks wait 60 minutes on new routes as South/West/Central whites enjoy 6-15 minutes.

2. Title VI Disparate Impact: “Austin is [the] Most Economically Segregated Metro Area” (Texas Tribune, 2015). “Although the Black population makes up 8% of the total Travis County population, 35% of the homeless population identify as Black, which indicates a high level of disproportionality (i.e., the rate of homelessness for Blacks is 4.4 times greater than what one would expect given racial/ethnic composition of Austin/Travis County)” per Community Advancement Network 2019 Report (p. 7). To where would Rep. Capriglione and privileged white Downtown Austin Alliance members have Blacks live in Austin without public transportation to access jobs or *affordable housing, in part, on FM 734/Parmer Lane—Samsung to Apple, Applied Materials, 3 HEBs, and East Village 425-acre development (construction site)?

3. Fair Housing Act of 1968 Disparate Impact Violation: Highland Village is the former Home for Negro Orphans—later Highland Mall. Now, Austin Community College-Highland mixed-use development includes Jacob Fontaine Plaza and streets named for Blacks, including Wilhelmina Delco—first Black elected official in Austin, later Texas House of Representatives 10-term member—but 80% area median income (“AMI”) excludes Blacks! The same is true for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit sites west of Loop 1/MoPac, often requiring 80% AMI (\$54,700). June 23, 2016 Austin Chronicle disaggregated salary by race. Blacks earned \$50,820, Latino (\$43,198) while white (\$97,939) and Asian families (\$101,699) earned twice as much. Per Travis County, “Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area Fiscal Year 2020 Median Family Income = \$97,600.” November 2020, Austin reported Blacks earn (\$42,422), Hispanics (\$50,332). 80% AMI equates to redlining by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, “first in the nation” public housing authority formed in 1937.

4. HB 1925 Funding Penalty: “Sec. 364.004. DENIAL OF STATE GRANT FUNDS. (a) A local entity may not receive state grant funds, and state grant funds for the local entity shall be denied, for the state fiscal year following the year in which a final judicial determination in an action brought under Sec. 364.003 is made that the entity has intentionally violated Sec. 364.002.” HB 1925 knowingly creates disparate impacts against Blacks who are disproportionately homeless. This could, ultimately, jeopardize the state’s Federal funding and Project Connect! Let HB 1925 die in Committee. Thanks!~zcyj

Brittany Salazar

Self, student

Houston, TX

Oppose

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Lisa Williams
self - attorney
Austin, TX

I am opposed to public camping. It has resulted in the proliferation of crime, trash, biohazardous matter, and violence in Austin. This is not the way to help people experiencing homelessness. There are drug treatment programs, psychiatric facilities, and living quarters available. We need to utilize those instead of inviting other cities to send people here. Austin has really changed for the worse since public camping was allowed.

Penny Adrian
Texas Poor People's Campaign
Cedar Park, TX

As a Christian I strongly oppose this bill. My church helps our poor and unhoused neighbors and no decent Christian person could support a bill making it against the law to find safer ways to survive outdoors. Three people have died at Camp Abbot due to heat exposure or, during the arctic blast, of hypothermia. No one could read the gospels and support this cruel inhuman anti-Christian bill. We need to house our neighbors, not punish them for being poor, elderly, and disabled.

Wesley Ferrell, Mr
self, unemployed
Schertz, TX

This bill is inhumane and not the correct approach to combat homelessness. We need to create infrastructure to support these people in need and not criminalize them sleeping. Do not pass this bill!

Travis Sadler
Self
Dallas, TX

Where will the homeless go? What if a city does not have a homeless shelter? What relief efforts are going to be implemented to REDUCE homelessness in Texas? HB 1925 does not solve the root issue of homelessness. Even as a Republican I am not afraid to say this is a sick attempt to "fix" a statewide issue.

Elizabeth Stringer
Self, Case Manager, BSW
Austin, TX

Homelessness should not be a crime. Sleeping in public should not be a crime. Camping in a tent within the city should not be a crime. This bill shows blatant discrimination and a display of malice toward those experiencing homelessness in our community. They are just that; people. They are people who may very well suffer from substance use disorder, have lost a job and, subsequently, their housing; maybe they are people who have little to no skills or education and cannot find employment sufficient enough to pay for housing. In wake of the shortage of social services in our community, these individuals have found a way to survive in the best way they know how. I hear the concerns citizens have about "tent cities," and many of those are valid, as they involve safety; however, a criminal charge is not the answer. It does not solve the issue at hand. It does not house anyone, and it creates even more barriers for these people to find housing in the future. Fines solve nothing. A few days in jail solves nothing. It creates more work for the police and hinders those suffering from this chronic social problem. Many of us are possibly only a few missed paychecks away from being in that exact scenario. Instead of seeing the tents and camps as an eyesore, I encourage everyone to see it as proof of the inequality and inequity within our own community. I encourage all of you to see it as

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evidence that not everything is okay, and that you should not be complacent. I encourage you to see it as an opportunity to get involved with an organization that is trying to help these individuals find housing. I beg of you, please have some sense of compassion and sympathy for these very real people experiencing a very real issue, and please choose to find a way to help, not hurt them further. We are all human, and we are all just trying to survive.

Piper Nelson, Ms

Self

Austin, TX

Homelessness cannot and should not be criminalized. I oppose this bill.

Trina Hill

Self/Front Steps

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

Finally, this bill would create a huge unfunded mandate for the many small and mid-size communities that don't have public sleeping bans today, and it would force this unfunded mandate through the threat of losing state grant funds, hurting local governments. If you care about reducing homelessness, suburban and rural local govt budgets or the humanity of unhoused people, you'll oppose this bill.

Madison Dealing

Self / Case Management Specialist

Round Rock, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan and Case Manager for homeless individuals and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Cassandra Gary

Silent Hands Ministry - ANCC

Cedar Park, TX

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Emily Britz, MSW

Trinity Center

Austin, TX

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Emily O'Shea

self social worker

Austin, TX

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Francesca Servidio

Self

Austin, TX

Good morning,

My name is Frankie and I'm a Texan concerned about our brothers and sisters experiencing homelessness.

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. By saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting IDs, and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks' chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Thank you,

Frankie Servidio

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Anna Becerra

Self-housing navigator

Buda, TX

I understand that Austin wants to hide homelessness. Look the other way and pretend it's not an issue. These homeless individuals do not need to get beat down with a criminal offense when they're already down. Some of them are veterans who have fought for our country and this is how we repay them? By looking the other way? By charging them with a case that they won't be able to beat and they will now be in and out of jail for being at a lower advantage than us. Our county jail is already suffering from lack of space (former corrections officer here, I know... I've seen it, I've dealt with the frustration first hand). Leave space in jails for those who are aggressive, rapists, murders, MONSTERS. HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS DO NOT BELONG IN JAIL. They need help with their medical, mental health, housing needs, etc. Please do not sweep this under the rug and pretend Austin does not have a huge homeless issue that needs to be addresses. We can address this issue by providing help to these individuals, not by fighting against them and making their lives harder than it is. HOMELESSNESS SHOULD NOT BE A CRIME.

Elliot Liebman

Self / Software Developer

Austin, TX

Hi, I'm a Texan concerned about homelessness and I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. This bill would cruelly punish people for having nowhere else to go. Plus, by saddling unhoused people with tickets they can't pay, warrants that prevent them from getting ID and arrests that give them criminal records, this bill would hurt folks chances of getting employment and housing and actually keep more people homeless longer.

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Allison Dove

Self

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose HB 1925 on the agenda in State Affairs on Thursday. As someone who works with a population that struggles heavily with homelessness, I can assure you this bill will do far more harm than good.

This bill would punish people who have no place to go and would create more obstacles for them to effectively find housing and employment. Tickets that cannot be paid will only worsen the financial struggle that the homeless already struggle with daily that impedes their ability to pay for sufficient housing, food, and other basic necessities. Warrants issued for not paying tickets will impede their ability to get identification which is necessary for hiring and housing. Arrests will only lead to a criminal record that further prevents their ability to find employment. The criminalization of homelessness will not reduce homelessness, but rather create increased obstacles for finding employment and housing. This bill will only perpetuate the vicious cycle of homelessness and will create barriers against any form of relief from the homelessness that these individuals already experience daily. If you care about reducing homelessness or the humanity of unhoused people in our state, you will oppose this bill. Avenues and tools to create greater access to housing and employment for those experiencing homelessness will be far more effective in reducing homelessness when compared to its criminalization. This is the area in which state government should be focusing its efforts to reduce homelessness. The criminalization of homelessness will only perpetuate this issue.

Jo Kathryn Quinn, President/CEO

Caritas of Austin

Austin, TX

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I am opposed to this bill and ask for all committee members to oppose. For over 40 years I have worked to end homelessness in communities across Texas. Having served for many years on the board of Texas Homeless Network, I've personally engaged with the full range of communities (largest cities to small rural towns) grappling with permanent solutions for homelessness. Unfortunately, the problem is growing and we haven't done what needs to be done to equip municipalities to effectively implement the permanent solutions which are necessary to actually end homelessness. This bill is a good example of the well-known anecdote of the person who sees babies floating down the river and is snatching them one by one out of the river rather than going upstream to find out why babies are in the river. Except in this case, this bill doesn't actually "save" anyone, rather simply moves them so they can't be seen. Spending tax dollars like this is irresponsible and inhumane. Criminalizing homelessness across the state will have the unintended consequence of extending the amount of time people experience homelessness. As Texans we should be brave enough to face this formidable problem rather than seeking to hide it. I encourage members of the legislature to spend their time on real solutions that providers across the state are effectively implementing with sustainable success. These solutions, however are not funded by the State of Texas, but the federal government and philanthropy. Texas needs to get in this game and stop sitting on the sideline of the homelessness issue. HB 1925 is a hiding bill which essentially "says" if we don't have to look at homelessness it will somehow magically go away. This is "magical thinking" for sure. I implore you to stop this bill where it is.

Hilliard Brittain

Self

GARLAND, TX 75044, TX

I no longer feel safe in coming to the Capitol to let my voice be heard due to the out-of-control homeless situation in Austin. Please support HB 1925 and end camping in public places so we can focus on helping the homeless in more effective ways. Thank you!

Eden Myers

self (na)

Austin, TX

This bill criminalizes homelessness, without actually doing anything to provide a place for the homeless to go. It also puts police officers in the position of solving a problem that shouldn't be their responsibility- they really don't have the tools to deal with homelessness. Can the police create a place for homeless people to be? All they can do is take them to jail. This just clogs up an already overloaded system, which raises my taxes and keeps the courts and police from actually going after criminals who are the real threat. If we don't want to see homeless people camping in public, then let's get people a place to go, and connect them to services that can actually keep them off the street.

Thank you,
Eden Myers

Julie Kellogg

self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes, camping or living in public spaces is a misuse of the space, and infringes on the rights of others to enjoy the area. Camping areas are designated and are equipped to handle camping, public areas are not. Setting up camping settlements under bridges or parks is not compassionate, it is the opposite of compassionate. It is dirty, spreads disease, is not safe and creates a mess, hurts our businesses and tourist industry. Tax payers did not sign up for that mess to happen in our towns and cities.