

CBH-1 CORRESPONDENCE – Danny Wilson

From: Danny Wilson
Sent: Sunday, August 16, 2015 8:08 PM
To: cityclerk
Subject: Fwd: Homeless, DOJ, Police, Jobs, Budget

8/16/2015

Dear Council Members, Department Official and Mayor,

Good day, and I hope this letter finds you all well. I am addressing you with great concern over the future of the City of Long Beach's direction of creating opportunity.

Recently the Department of Justice – DOJ made statement identifying the situation and opportunity of the homelessness in America, and not just Long Beach, California. In so many words the DOJ has said to ban the homeless from sleeping outside, write them a ticket, create them a criminal record, and they go to apply for housing, have a criminal record, be told they have a record and not get the housing because of the criminal record, they go back to sleeping outside. The other part the police look like they write a lot of criminal records, they get more money. And, this goes around and around.

Now the proposed budget for the police looks like it is getting bigger and bigger. The law suits from the DOJ are coming. The quick fix of writing up someone that cannot get a place to stay and not get a job and not pay taxes is a no where solution. Beside you may need it for the law suits from DOJ and others.

Homelessness DOJ

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2015/08/13/its-unconstitutional-to-ban-the-homeless-from-sleeping-outside-the-federal-government-says/>

It's unconstitutional to ban the homeless from sleeping outside, the federal government says
By Emily Badger August 13

A homeless man takes a nap on a bench at the snow-covered Lafayette Park near the White House in Washington in February 2014. (Jewel Samad/Agence France-Presse)

We all need sleep, which is a fact of life but also a legally important point. Last week, the Department of Justice argued as much in a statement of interest it filed in a relatively obscure case in Boise, Idaho, that could impact how cities regulate and punish homelessness.

Boise, like many cities — the number of which has swelled since the recession — has an ordinance banning sleeping or camping in public places. But such laws, the DOJ says, effectively criminalize homelessness itself in situations where people simply have nowhere else to sleep. From the DOJ's filing:

When adequate shelter space exists, individuals have a choice about whether or not to sleep in public. However, when adequate shelter space does not exist, there is no meaningful distinction between the status of being homeless and the conduct of sleeping in public. Sleeping is a life-sustaining activity — i.e., it must occur at some time in some place. If a person literally has nowhere else to go, then enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance against that person criminalizes her for being homeless.

Such laws, the DOJ argues, violate the Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishment, making them unconstitutional. By weighing in on this case, the DOJ's first foray in two decades into this still-unsettled area of law, the federal government is warning cities far beyond Boise and backing up federal goals to treat homelessness more humanely.

"It's huge," says Eric Tars, a senior attorney for the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, which originally filed the lawsuit against Boise, alongside Idaho Legal Aid Services.

[Lifting bans on sleeping outside won't stop criminalization of homelessness]

According to a NLCHP report last year that surveyed 187 cities between 2011 and 2014, 34 percent had citywide laws banning camping in public. Another 43 percent prohibited sleeping in vehicles, and 53 percent banned sitting or lying down in certain public places. All of these laws criminalize the kind of activities — sitting, resting, sleeping — that are arguably fundamental to human existence.

And they've criminalized that behavior in an environment where most cities have far more homeless than shelter beds. In 2014, the federal government estimates, there were about 153,000 unsheltered homeless on the street in the U.S. on any given night.

Laws like these have grown more common as that math has actually grown worse since the recession.

"Homelessness is just becoming more visible in communities, and when homelessness becomes more visible, there's more pressure on community leaders to do something about it," Tars says. "And rather than actually examining what's the best thing to do about homelessness, the knee-jerk response — as with so many other things in society — is 'we'll address this social issue with the criminal justice system.'"

It's also easier, he adds, for elected officials to argue for criminal penalties when the public costs of that policy are much harder to see than the costs of investing in shelters or services for the poor. Ultimately, though, advocates and the federal government have argued, it's much more expensive to ticket the homeless — with the court, prison and health costs associated with it — than to invest in "housing first" solutions that have worked in many parts of the country.

Criminal citations also compound the problem of homelessness, making it harder for people to qualify for jobs or housing in the future.

"You have to check those [criminal] boxes on the application forms," Tars says. "And they don't say 'were you arrested because you were trying to simply survive on the streets?' They say 'if you have an arrest record, we're not going to rent to you.'"

No plastic bags, yeah. I am down with the environment thing too. Let's do something different. Let's do something hard, in small increments so that police will not have to keep increasing, buying more and more surveillance toys, new military equipment to watch someone already outside to see. Let's stop having little secret police chest to watch and live near citizens that ask the hard questions, really. Is that a good use of citizen money, really? The city of Bell had bad official. We have good officials and some sly and not so good.

Let look for better was to create opportunity, housing and the really new idea getting jobs. They can stop homelessness too.

I do not like to just complain, so I found some cool ideas you may want to piggy back on.

This is from a great online magazine called Fast Company. I might help you relook at the, in my opinion, one-sided budget and better use that could give back more, through creating better opportunity.

<http://www.fastcoexist.com/3047840/the-us-cities-where-creative-jobs-are-thriving>

The U.S. Cities Where Creative Jobs Are Thriving

It's the designers, actors, and artists that make cities interesting. The rest of us just take advantage. Here's where those jobs are growing the fastest.

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The finance guys on Wall Street might throw a lot of money around in New York's restaurants, bars, and housing markets, but the finance sector doesn't have the level of influence on New York City's local economic health that you might think. Instead, it's the growing numbers of striving actors, writers, designers, and artists that give the city its edge.

That's according to [a new report](#) from the [Center for an Urban Future](#), a think tank based in New York. It concludes that not only has New York City overtaken Los Angeles as the city with the most creative workers over the last decade, but also that it has had among the fastest-growing creative economies. Only Austin's and Portland's creative sectors grew more in size, while Los Angeles's declined. New York City is also home to the greatest portion of creative jobs in the nation—8.6% in 2013, up from 7% a decade prior. No other industry in New York matches that nationwide heft, even finance and insurance.

The Center for an Urban Future uses the data to argue that the city's creative economy is its greatest competitive advantage today. Although New York's tech sector is growing faster and the retail and healthcare fields employ more overall workers, the creative class and the culture it creates is what attracts others to the city, the report says. But it also notes that this advantage is at risk as other cities, like Portland and Detroit and even Shanghai and Berlin, aggressively court creative individuals, nonprofits, and businesses.

"New York has this incredible advantage because it's part of our DNA. We're not starting from scratch," says Jonathan Bowles, the center's executive director. "But there's real competitors for New York today. Maybe 15 years ago, for a lot of emerging artists, there weren't so many options."

Overall, the report found that 7%, or nearly 300,000, of the city's jobs are either employed in 10 creative industries (advertising, film and television, broadcasting, publishing, architecture, design, music, visual arts, performing arts and independent artists), self-employed workers in creative fields, or creative employees in non-creative fields. While employment in finance and legal service has stagnated, employment in most creative fields outpaced the city's overall 12% job growth.

Danor Aharon via [Shutterstock](#)

New York City has aggressively tried to develop its tech sector in recent years. But Bowles cautions that New York's policymakers should not ignore the challenges that creative workers face, which include skyrocketing rents for housing and work space, a decline in government funding support for arts and cultural organizations, student debt, and a lack of citywide economic develop policies addressing the sector.

"I do think sometimes that with all the focus on tech, that policymakers have overlooked this incredible economic driver that's right under our noses," says Bowles. "What New York has with its creative sector is really very much like Silicon Valley. It's long been on top, and other cities are trying to find that special sauce," Bowles says.

There's plenty more data in the report about New York City. Read [more here](#).

All jokes aside. This is serious, real viable solutions are needed for the future and it appears it may be coming in the form of new pressure. I like Long Beach and I want to see it get ready to find the best solutions to thrive genuinely, now and for years to come. Thank you all.

Danny Wilson