

Appendix B: *Protected Class Resolution*

Homeless Protected Class Resolution, Adopted by the National Coalition for the Homeless

Whereas, the United States Government has adopted and is party to the United Nation's Document referenced as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which " confers on every member of society a right to basic economic, social, and cultural entitlements, that every (nation) state should recognize, serve, and protect, of which food, clothing, medical care, and housing are definitive components of the right to a minimum standard of living and dignity," and

Whereas, the United States Government has adopted, and is party to the United Nation's Document; the Habitat Agenda, which calls for certain actions that include but are not limited to: protection against discrimination, legal security of tenure and equal access to land including women and the poor; effective protection from illegal forced evictions, taking human rights into consideration, bearing in mind that homeless people should not be penalized for their status; by adopting policies aimed at making housing habitable, affordable and accessible, including those who are unable to secure adequate housing through their own means, and

Whereas, the United Nations Document: Habitat Agenda, calls for the "Effective monitoring and evaluation of housing conditions, including the extent of homelessness and inadequate housing policies and implementing effective strategies and plans to address those problems," and

Whereas, there is a shortage of affordable housing stock nationwide, and

Whereas, the national minimum wage is an insufficient amount of money to secure safe, decent, affordable housing even at the most basic financial level, and

Appendix B: *Protected Class Resolution* (cont.)

Whereas, more than the minimum wage is required in every state to be able to afford a one bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent, as set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, and

Whereas, the combined effect of these and other circumstances create a group of people that have no alternatives to living on the streets of our nation, and

Whereas, it is estimated that nationwide, there are at least 760,000 persons living without a permanent, fixed, individual residence on any given night, and

Whereas, at least 28% of our nations' homeless are United States Veterans, and

Whereas, approximately 25% of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of mental illness, and

Whereas, the fastest growing segment of the population is women with children, and

Whereas, 36.5 million men, women and children of all ages are living in poverty (many of whom are already homeless), and

Whereas, there has been a collective, concerted effort at city and county levels to devise laws and ordinances that find homeless people guilty of having committed a crime for simple acts such as sitting, lying down, sleeping in public, or even in their own cars and

Whereas, there are certain life sustaining acts such as eating, breathing and sleeping that must be conducted by all persons including those that are homeless who must conduct these acts in public, and

Appendix B: *Protected Class Resolution* (cont.)

Whereas, these laws and ordinances are designed to criminalize and sweep these homeless persons from our nations' streets and imprison them, without regard for their personal safety or care for their personal belongings, for no reason other than they are lacking housing and as a result, are characterized as non-citizens, and are deprived of their human rights, and

Whereas, these impoverished persons are targeted and often made victims of malicious hate crimes and selective enforcement of these laws and ordinances, and

Whereas, camping, sleeping, sitting, lying and other anti-homeless laws including those that restrict the feeding of people who are hungry, are being enforced at a time when emergency housing shelters are consistently full and no housing alternatives remain available, and wages paid are wholly inadequate to afford people the basics of life: food, clothing and shelter, and

Whereas, the enforcement of such laws under such circumstances constitute cruel and unusual punishment and impinge upon these persons access to travel,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That persons without a fixed, permanent, individual place of residence, and those that are earning 100% of Federal Poverty Guidelines or less, are sufficient in number characteristics, and vulnerability to compromise a distinct class of people, and as a result, shall hence forth constitute a Protected Class with all rights and protections under such a designation. Herein after, this Protected Class, will be referred to as the Unhoused Population.

Appendix B: *Protected Class Resolution* (cont.)

AND FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that as a Protected Class they will be protected:

1. From laws against sleeping, sitting, lying down in public,
2. From laws that restrict them from being provided food,
3. From acts or laws interfering with their right to travel,
4. From wages that are so low that they are denied access to housing,
5. From laws or practices that disregard their rights of ownership, and protections for their personal belongings,
6. From being made targets of hate crimes/violence, and
7. From being characterized and treated as non citizens.
8. From being denied employment due to one's homeless or formerly homeless status.
9. From laws or practices that discriminate against people and deny them any type of housing based on their present or past condition of homelessness.



Image: National Homelessness Law Center