



**AN UNWAVERING
PATH FORWARD TO
HOUSING JUSTICE**
NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION



NLIHC's HoUsed Campaign for Long-Term Housing Solutions

September 9, 2024

Agenda



Welcome & Updates

- Sarah Gallagher, NLIHC

New Reporting on Illegal Evictions

- Cecilia Reyes, Business Insider

Updates Since *Johnson v. Grants Pass*

- Antonia Fasanelli, National Homelessness Law Center (NHLC)

Field Update: Advocacy Strategies Behind MA's *Affordable Homes Act*

- Matt Noyes, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)

Policy Update

- Kim Johnson, NLIHC

Next Steps

Welcome & Updates



Sarah Gallagher

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New Reporting on Illegal Evictions



Cecilia Reyes

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New Reporting on Illegal Evictions



BUSINESS INSIDER

Over the past year, Business Insider looked into illegal lockouts in major US cities. Few cities track them. But police receive thousands of emergency calls.

 *Enable audio.*

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REAL ESTATE

When renters get locked out, they may never get back in

Most remedies to illegal lockouts offer near impunity to landlords — and little recourse to tenants.

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REAL ESTATE

Unprotected at the margins of the rental market

Millions of people living in long-stay motels, makeshift rooming houses, informal trailer parks, or doubled up with family are left out of tenant protections. They're especially vulnerable to lockouts.

New Reporting on Illegal Evictions



REAL ESTATE

Business Insider seeks tips regarding potential abuses by corporate landlords across the US

Cecilia Reyes Aug 8, 2024, 12:30 PM EDT

Share Save



Bridget Bennett for Insider

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Phone: 312-975-3350

- Business Insider is investigating the rental practices of corporate landlords.
- We'd like to hear from current or former tenants or employees of corporate landlords or management companies.
- If you'd like to share information, please consider reaching out confidentially to reporter Cecilia Reyes.

Updates Since *Johnson v. Grants Pass*



Antonia Fasanelli

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JOHNSON V. GRANTS PASS



HOUSING
NOT HANDCUFFS

Johnson v. Grants Pass Overview

TL/DR:

- Case is about whether cities can punish unhoused people for covering themselves with a blanket or sleeping in a vehicle, *even in the absence of shelter.*



What SCOTUS Said

Decision

- It is NOT cruel and unusual punishment – under 8th amendment
- To ticket and fine, even if no shelter is available
- If the law applies to all persons

What did SCOTUS say can be done?

- If unhoused
- No shelter is available
- Can raise defense in criminal proceeding – called necessity defense

Local Electeds Holding the Line Against Punishment

Positive Responses from Elected Officials

“This ruling must not be used as an excuse for cities across the country to attempt to arrest their way out of this problem or hide the homelessness crisis in neighboring cities or in jail”

– LA Mayor Karen Bass

Positive Responses from Elected Officials

- **CA:**
 - LA County Refuses to Jail unhoused;
 - South Bay Cities Council creates pledge to not aggressively criminalize; and
 - Tolumne County & San Rafael operate sanctioned encampments
- **PA:** state legs intend to codify Martin protections; Pittsburgh not enforcing ordinances
- **WA:** Kitsap County recommends no change following SCOTUS ruling, services instead
- **IL:** Springfield – camping ban tabled

Increases in Punishment

Negative Actions Passed/Issued Since *Grants Pass*

- **35 municipal and 1 statewide bills/actions have passed/been issued:**
 - AR: 2 municipal
 - CA: 1 state Exec Order & 15 municipal bills/actions
 - IL: 3 municipalities pass template camping bans
 - IN: 1 municipal camping ban
 - MN: 2 municipal bans
 - MT: 1 municipal ban
 - ND: 1 municipal ban

Actions Passed/Issued Since *Grants Pass*

Increasing Punishment

- **Municipal bans (con't):**
 - NH: 1 municipal ban
 - NM: 1 municipal ban
 - OR: 2 municipal bans (incl. Grants Pass)
 - TX: 1 municipal ban
 - WA: 2 municipal bans
 - WI: 1 municipal ban
 - WV: 1 municipal ban
 - WY: 1 curfew

What's Next - Legislation

1. Demand for **\$356 billion** as a federal downpayment for housing in the US

- <https://johnsonvgrantspass.com/solve-homelessness>

2. Protect the Rights of Unhoused persons from ticket/fine/arrest

- <https://housingnothandcuffs.org/gloria-johnson-template-legislation/>

Housing Justice & Transformation

- **Cross Movement Collaboration**
 - Decrim Homelessness, Mental Illness & Substance Use
 - **November 18 & 19th** Convening in DC hosted by the Law Center
- **National Coalition for Housing Justice –**
www.nchj.org

Legal Defense Clinic – An Organizing/Legal Model

- Project of **Western Regional Advocacy Project AND National Homelessness Law Center**
- Community-Based Legal Clinics w/in Organizing Groups
- Alleviate immediate needs
- Organize to build power for policy change
- **Learn More** - <https://homelesslaw.org/publications/> and <https://wraphome.org/ldc/>

Questions?

- Antonia Fasanelli – afasanelli@homelesslaw.org
- Eric Tars – etars@homelesslaw.org

Advocacy Strategies Behind MA's *Affordable Homes Act*



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Policy Updates



Kim Johnson

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Policy Updates



Where Are We?

- Three weeks to pass continuing resolution (CR) and avoid shutdown
- Speaker Johnson's CR:
 - Extend funding until March 28, 2025
 - Includes "SAVE Act"
 - No additional funding for VA medical care funding gap
 - \$10 billion for disaster relief, plus access to up-front appropriations -- \$30 billion for disaster relief total
- House vote scheduled this week

Despite the drama, a CR is expected to pass by September 30

Long-Term CRs Cause Major Setbacks

Because the costs of housing and homelessness programs rise every year, it is essential programs receive increased funding

**CRs maintain a flat level of funding,
which acts as a cut to HUD programs**

Policy Updates



What Next?

Use NLIHC's resources to push Congress for a short-term CR and a final FY25 funding bill with increased funding for affordable housing and homelessness resources!

- **Email or call members' offices** using NLIHC's Take Action page: p2a.co/nliqghj
- **Share stories** of those directly impacted by homelessness and housing instability using our Storytelling Tips and Tricks: tinyurl.com/53f73men
- **Utilize our advocacy toolkit** *Oppose Dramatic Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing*: tinyurl.com/5n6v7zeh

Next Steps & Resources

NLIHC's HoUSed Campaign (nlihc.org/housed): Campaign Updates