

Dear El Segundo City Council Members,

As high school students in El Segundo, we urge our city officials to end the criminalization of our unhoused neighbors. Although only representing 1.1% of the overall US population, Los Angeles County is home to 7.1% of the nation's unhoused. And at least 3,992 are unsheltered and living on our streets in the LAHSA Service Planning Area 8, which includes El Segundo, according to the 2024 Point In Time Count.

The criminalization of unhoused people is a widespread issue across the United States, where laws and policies disproportionately target individuals experiencing houselessness. Criminalization of unhoused people is cruel. It punishes them for poverty and lacking housing. It results in incarceration and destruction of their property. It makes it harder for them to secure employment and housing. Channeling resources towards punitive measures is an economic burden for El Segundo taxpayers, is ineffective at tackling the core issue of houselessness, and diverts from real solutions, especially permanent housing.

Here in El Segundo, laws like sections 7-8-2 and 7-8-3 of the El Segundo Code of Ordinances (ESCO) directly target and criminalize unhoused people, making their survival even harder. We need legislation that protects, rather than punishes, members of our community. We demand the repeal of ESCO sections 7-8-2 and 7-8-3. We call on you to take action and help end the criminalization of unhoused people in El Segundo and beyond.

It's not just about decriminalizing houselessness—it's about humanizing our approach to this crisis and ensuring human rights are maintained regardless of housing status. It is a moral and societal obligation for the City of El Segundo to implement constructive and compassionate solutions that focus on helping already unhoused people get into housing that is permanent, stable, affordable, and meets all the criteria of their human right to housing.

Please, stand with us in demanding justice and fairness for our unhoused neighbors. We have signed this petition to show our support for the repeal of ESCO sections 7-8-2 and 7-8-3 and the passing of state and federal laws prohibiting criminalization of unhouse people.

Sincerely,

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