

Dear Mayor Dennis McBride,

As high school students in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, we urge our city officials to end the criminalization of our unhoused neighbors. 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 Wauwatosa taxpayers, is ineffective at tackling the core issue of houselessness, and diverts from real solutions, especially permanent housing.

Here in Wauwatosa, laws like 7.56.060 and 7.64.020 of the City of Wauwatosa Municipal Code (CWMC) 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 CWMC sections 7.56.060 and 7.64.020. We call on you to take action and help end the criminalization of unhoused people in Wauwatosa 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 Wauwatosa 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 CWMC sections 7.56.060 and 7.64.020 and the passing of state and federal laws prohibiting criminalization of unhoused people.

Sincerely,

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