

What Do We Do When Civil and Human Rights are Under Attack? Stand Up and Fight Back – NAEH Innovations Conference 2025 Presented by WA Human Right to Housing Collective (HRHC)

Click on the **BLUE** hyperlinks for detailed information about the examples/sources provided.

Appendix A – History Brief

1. Three Major Root Causes of Homelessness (see linked powerpoint for full list)
 - a. [A Tale of Two Acts](#) – Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP)
 - i. Housing Act of 1937
 1. In response to the Great Depression and powerful social justice movements of the 1930s, the government took an active role in creating housing and jobs.
 2. The Housing Act of 1937 was part of the New Deal and established a federal commitment to low-income housing, establishing the nation's first public housing program. The government increased its role in regulating the economy and providing safety net programs to protect citizens against market failures. The New Deal had many shortcomings – especially when it came to addressing racial and gender inequality – but it still demonstrated that the federal government could effectively alleviate systemic poverty.
 - ii. The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act of 1998
 1. In response to the growing conservative movement of the 1970s, the government decreased its role in providing housing and safety net programs.
 2. The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) reversed the federal government's sixty-year commitment to providing a decent home for low-income families and individuals.
 3. QHWRA also deregulated housing finance, making privatization and risky financing legislatively possible (e.g. HOPE VI, Choice Neighborhoods, and Transforming Rental Assistance) and formally repealed "one-for-one" replacement of units lost to disposition and demolition.
 4. Neoliberal policymakers believed that cutting taxes for wealthy individuals and corporations, privatizing public services, and freeing the market from regulation would create greater economic growth, individual initiative, and more efficient social services.
 - b. Housing as a Commodity
 - i. Since the 1970s, housing policies have favored strategies that rely on the private market
 1. Rent subsidies on the private market (Housing Choice Vouchers) and tax breaks (Low Income Housing Tax Credits for developers)

- and Mortgage Interest Deductions for homeowners) have taken priority over producing and subsidizing public housing.
- 2. The volatile housing market has increased homelessness, housing costs, gentrification, privatization, and racial inequality.
- c. Historical and Ongoing Criminalization of Homelessness
 - i. Jim Crow, Sundown towns and Anti-Okie laws, Operation Wetback and Ugly laws - they all targeted various populations based on their racial, economic, social, immigration or disability status.
 - ii. Today's exclusionary and discriminatory laws target homeless people; they criminalize sleeping, sitting, loitering, panhandling and even food-sharing in public spaces. Just like the laws from our past, they deny people their right to exist in local communities.

Appendix B – Examples and Resources

- Current threats and attacks on Civil and Human rights:
 - Judicial system corruption and weaponization
 - *Johnson* SCOTUS decision
 - Ruling: not unconstitutional/violation of 8th amendment for municipalities to fine people for sleeping and/or camping public places
 - Note unpaid fines can lead to arrests
 - Note pattern of municipalities appealing favorable court rulings nationwide i.e. *Kitchen*
 - Note other harmful offensive litigation tactics that lead to more homelessness and therefore overcrowding in shelters and on streets, too many people, not enough housing resources, etc.
 - Mass evictions
 - Slumlords disputing oversight agencies when held accountable for violations such as discrimination and uninhabitability
 - Example Millienna property management (Memphis, TN) lawsuit against HUD in response to HUD attempting to enforce landlord-tenant and section 8 rules after tenants experienced uninhabitable housing, discrimination and retaliation in the form of rent increases and evictions
 - Governments attacking community service organizations
 - Example Austin Tx AG Paxton filing lawsuit against Sunrise Community Church's Homeless Navigation Center citing "threatening" environment to surrounding housed community
 - Legislative attacks
 - Measures like [SODA](#), SOAP, [no-sit-no-lie](#) laws and camping bans
 - Examples: Everett, Seattle, [Burien](#), Vancouver, Grants Pass, etc.

- Sweeps
 - Unhoused individuals and communities targeted:
 - [Seattle escalations continue](#)
 - [WRAP](#) members + HRHC survey results – individuals
 - [Street Outreach form/survey](#)
 - [Cornelius Taylor](#) (Atlanta), murdered by City during sweep when they bulldozed his tent just this year – Jan 2025 in preparation for MLK Day march/activities
 - [New Orleans and the 2025 Super Bowl](#) – State shut down sanctioned camp where residents were actually transitioning into permanent housing and moved them to a makeshift facility 20 miles away from downtown – not big enough, community is 300+ people and facility only holds 250. State spent close to \$20 million on this mass displacement despite City’s pleas for them to manage transitioning folks into housing for only \$6 million state funding. Residents were loaded up into buses and militarized police forces were present for “safety concerns”.
 - Briefly note that there's a history of cities with similar policies for sporting events, concerts, marathons, etc.
 - Unhoused service organizations targeted using zoning codes and banishment type legislation
 - [Hope N Wellness - brief overview of City’s harassment and bullying HNW to relocate or shut down citing zoning codes that originated over a decade ago](#) (2006)
 - Many other examples in other cities – LA, San Francisco, Denver, etc.
 - Targeted orgs as if they are “aiding and abetting” unhoused people; not administrative attacks they are attempts at murder so that the municipality doesn’t have to correct the issues and/or pushing to a different jurisdiction so that the other municipalities have to address issues (crack down on harm reduction)
 - Action steps = if your community is dealing with this, fight back and host sit-ins and/or file TRO’s
- Legal Aid Partnerships
 - Movement lawyering
 - [WRAP](#) + [NHLC](#)
 - [LDC’s](#)
 - History
 - Current expansion work
 - [Grants Pass v Johnson](#)
 - Collaborative amicus briefs (WRAP + NHLC + [Rankin](#), etc.)
 - KYR training before, during and after SCOTUS ruling

- Court listening sessions
 - *Johnson* SCOTUS oral arguments April 2024 (HRHC + SNS + NLG + ACLU)
 - Universities
 - SU
 - [HRAP](#) clinics with [HRHC](#)
 - University of the Pacific
 - [Buccola Family Homeless Advocacy Clinic](#)
 - Berkley
 - [Homelessness Service Project](#)
 - ACLU
 - Impact litigation
 - [Kitcheon \(Seattle\)](#) and [Currie \(Spokane\)](#)
 - Amicus briefs in collaboration with community
 - NLG
 - KYR + legal observation
 - [NLG FarWest chapter](#)
- Policy and Organizing Tactics
 - Movement lawyering collaborations (brief reiteration)
 - Education and empowerment
 - KYR
 - “Train the trainer” & legal observers
 - I.e. [Movement Law Lab](#) and [Law4blackLives](#) and LA CAN legal clinic
 - Pro se representation
 - Free legal aid services
 - Legal clinics
 - Impact litigation
 - I.e. TRO’s against local municipalities for excessive criminalization
 - Legal observation
 - Administrative and court claims
 - Street outreach
 - Mutual aid
 - Providing urgent survival needs and harm reduction while engaging in political education and organizing
 - I.e. Poor People’s Army
 - Survey assessments to help drive community advocacy and organizing tactics
 - WRAP - street outreach survey
 - HRHC - People’s Needs Assessment
 - Direct action
 - Sweeps response networks
 - I.e., Stop the Sweeps

- Mitigate damages and trauma during/immediately following sweeps
 - Document violence and law violations for future potential impact litigation and political advocacy
- Housing takeovers
 - I.e., [Poor People's Army](#)
- Legal Observation and cop watching for potential arrests and jail support, future impact litigation (attorney representation or pro se litigants), political advocacy, and report publishing
 - Separate from sweeps – monitoring daily police surveillance/harassment
 - Includes unhoused individuals + communities + providers (special focus on grassroots orgs i.e. [HNW](#))
- Protest in place during sweep displacement
 - Example – [LA CAN](#) (lavan???)
 - Must have proper planning and preparation
 - Power mapping
 - Risk assessments
 - Long-term goals and strategies
 - People power – committed organizers
- Campaigns
 - Organize against local BIDs
 - Coalition building to open access to resources and limit barriers i.e. [WRAP](#)
 - BID research reports
 - [Fact sheets](#)
 - Artwork
 - Note that art is important in all organizing tactics
 - National collaborations
 - [House Keys Not Handcuffs](#) (NHLC + NCH)
 - [Threat tracker](#) - map that tracks criminalization
 - Legislative advocacy to inform and drive local policies
- Intersectional solidarity and cross-sector organizing is imperative to fully address root causes of homelessness
 - BIPOC grassroots organizations
 - Prison and sentencing reform, restorative justice, and re-entry advocacy/service groups
 - I.e. [Black Prisoners Caucus](#) and [Look2Justice](#)
 - [More on Black Prisoners Caucus](#)
 - Voting rights groups
 - I.e. [Urban League Seattle](#), [Center for Common Ground](#) (national)
 - Immigrants rights groups
 - [Rapid Response networks \(i.e. WAISN\)](#)

- [WAISN RR Network](#)
- Public Health
 - Oversight and advisory i.e. [King County HCHN Community Advisory Group](#) and [King County Jail Health Services](#) Community Planning Committee
 - Collaboration with Medical Universities
 - I.e. [UW Med Huskies for Housing program](#) – [Tent City 3](#)
 - Medical-Legal partnerships
 - Vision for the future: KYR trainings & legal clinics at camps/in community (LDCs) with healthcare rights **and** homeless rights attorneys/experts
 - [WA MLP](#) active but does not currently serve unhoused communities
 - National MLP has partnered with NHCHN to [publish a report](#)
- Disability rights
 - I.e. [The Arc](#) (national) – Advocating at intersection of homelessness and disabilities in the wake of *Johnson*
 - Mental Health/trauma healing organizations i.e. [MH First Oakland](#)
 - Providing non-police responses to sweeps and other crises on the ground that focus on trauma-informed deescalation practices
 - KYR - police interactions and the ADA, reasonable accommodations at encampments and shelters
- LGBTQIA+ rights groups
 - Name change legal clinics i.e. [Lavender Rights Project](#)
- Tenants Rights Groups
 - I.e. [Services Not Sweeps Coalition](#) ([BeSeattle](#))