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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 25

Senate Bill 634 (Pérez)

Unhoused Service Providers Protection Act

Summary

SB 634 will prohibit local and state government entities from adopting an ordinance, or enforcing an existing ordinance, that prohibits a person or organization from providing basic survival services or resources to an unhoused person.

Background

California's unhoused crisis is among the most pressing humanitarian issues facing the state. According to the 2024 Homeless Point-in-Time Count, approximately 187,000 people experienced homelessness on a given night, while state data sources show upwards of 300,000 people experiencing homelessness over the course of a year.¹ California accounts for approximately 24 percent of the nation's population of people experiencing homelessness, the largest of any other state.² The majority of Californians experiencing homelessness are people of color with Black Californians most disproportionately impacted.³

Problem

Addressing the unhoused crisis in California requires proven response efforts focused on providing housing, basic services, and financial support for unhoused individuals. Such programs include the Bringing Families Home program and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Grant Program which have housed tens of thousands of people. The success of these unhoused service programs is largely based on supporting the efforts of community-based service providers.

Despite seeing progress from these programs that has led to California seeing a much smaller increase in homelessness than the rest of the country in 2024, there is a troubling trend of local governments adopting ordinances that impose punitive penalties, including fines and jail time, towards unhoused people for being unhoused and those providing basic survival services for the unhoused. The primary example of the later includes an ordinance that broadly categorized service providers as 'aiding and abetting' for supporting unhoused people or charge them with misdemeanors simply for handing out food and water.⁴ Instead of evidence-based intervention, such punitive policies only exacerbate the unhoused crisis by burdening unhoused individuals with debt and penalties they cannot afford, as well as cutting off the lifeline to critical services that ultimately offer a pathway off the streets.

The growing shift to criminalize the unhoused and those that assist them has shifted the focus from applying proven, humanitarian solutions to a stigmatized race to the bottom. Some local officials have even gone as far as saying the solution to the crisis is committing a "purge" with supplying drugs.⁵ Addressing this trend is of statewide concern.

Solution

SB 634 reaffirms California's commitment to addressing the unhoused crisis through a common sense and humanitarian approach. Specifically, this bill prohibits local and state government entities from adopting a new ordinance, or enforcing an existing ordinance, that prohibits a person or

¹ <https://calmatters.org/housing/homelessness/2025/01/hud-pit-count-2024/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20federal%20housing,Oceanside%20in%20San%20Diego%20County.>

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (2024). "Annual Homeless Assessment Report."

Last updated: May 15, 2025

³ California Budget and Policy Center. (2023). "Who is Experiencing Homelessness and Why?"

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/12/us/fremont-california-homeless-encampment-ban/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/california-mayors-remedy-for-homelessness-free-fentanyl-and-a-purge/>

organization from providing supportive services, including legal and medical services, as well as other basic survival resources, to an unhoused person. By eliminating these barriers, SB 634 ensures that people providing critical life-saving survival resources and support to among the most vulnerable, can continue to without fear of persecution and punishment as the state continues to tackle the unhoused crisis.

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