



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN RAFAEL, CA. – Legal Aid of Marin strongly condemns today's Supreme Court decision in [*City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*](#), which effectively criminalizes homelessness and strips away crucial protections for our most marginalized community members.

This devastating ruling overturns years of precedent that had prevented cities from punishing people simply for existing in public spaces when they have nowhere else to go. By allowing cities to enforce camping bans even when shelters are full, the Court has given local governments free rein to criminalize poverty and homelessness.

"This decision will make our housing crisis a humanitarian disaster, and its impacts will further harm countless neighbors that deserve our compassion," said Laura McMahon, Executive Director of Legal Aid of Marin. "The Court tells our unhoused neighbors that they have no right to exist in public spaces, even when they have no alternative. It's not just cruel - it's unconstitutional."

The Court's ruling ignores the reality that homelessness is often involuntary and that many individuals have no choice but to sleep outside or in their vehicles. By framing this as a policy issue rather than a constitutional one, the Court has abdicated its responsibility to protect the rights of the most marginalized members of our society.

"Just because we have the ability or opportunity to act doesn't mean it's the right thing to do," said Lucie Hollingsworth, Interim Managing Attorney and Policy Director. "The holding of this case has the potential to hurt and dehumanize countless members of our community, and we urge our local elected officials and policymakers to take future actions that do the opposite - remove barriers to housing instead of creating more. We expect that Marin lawmakers will act with ethical consideration, moral principle, and a commitment to treating all community members with dignity."

This decision will have immediate and dire consequences for hundreds of thousands of homeless individuals across the country, particularly in California, where homelessness rates are some of the highest. It will embolden cities to adopt punitive approaches to homelessness rather than focusing on constructive solutions like increasing access to affordable housing and comprehensive social services.

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Legal Aid of Marin's mission is to create an equitable Marin by empowering the community through legal representation, advocacy, and education. Our vision is for an inclusive Marin with equal justice and opportunity for all.