



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## Legislation Text

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Condemning the Supreme Court's decision to allow the criminalization of homelessness in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, and reaffirming the City of Philadelphia's commitment to housing as a human right.

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court issued a ruling in the case of *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, permitting the city of Grants Pass to criminalize people who do not have homes, even though there were no open shelter beds; and

WHEREAS, That ruling came in spite of a long history of Supreme Court precedent prohibiting the criminalization of a status, such as addiction or homelessness. When cities do not have enough beds for every person experiencing homelessness, ordinances criminalizing camping inherently criminalize people who do not have beds. Cities that follow these ordinances are throwing people into jail for simply not having a bed to sleep in; and

WHEREAS, Research has conclusively shown that the best long-term and most cost-effective solution to problems related to homelessness is a housing-first approach that prioritizes deeply affordable housing and placing people in long-term supportive housing environments. Incarceration leads to problems like inability to secure housing or a job, and forced treatment programs double the risk of death for people suffering from addiction; and

WHEREAS, Media coverage from *The Kensington Voice* has highlighted some of the brutal consequences of criminalization; 34 people were arrested, with the Philadelphia Department of Prisons prepared for intake. Those arrested did not receive social services; and

WHEREAS, People suffering from addiction are at increased risk of death when incarcerated; One of the 34 people arrested, Amanda Cahill, died in a Philadelphia jail a few days later; and

WHEREAS, These predictable consequences of criminalizing homelessness and addiction can only be mitigated through comprehensive housing, public health infrastructure and investments; not jails and incarceration. Disappearing people does not help our communities, and criminalizing homelessness is contrary to the principles of love that drove the founding of this City; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has an opportunity to demonstrate how cities can support every person, help people receive support when they need it, and provide the space to ensure problems rooted in lack of housing are not continuously repeated. A radically conservative Supreme Court cannot be the guiding light on how Philadelphia treats the people who live here; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Condemns the Supreme Court's decision to allow the criminalization of homelessness in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, and reaffirms the City of Philadelphia's commitment to housing as a human right.