

What: Press conference announcing a lawsuit against the City of San Luis Obispo to -stop the City from violating the constitutional right of the City's population of individuals experiencing homelessness

When: September 22, 2021, 12:00 p.m.

Where: San Luis Obispo Courthouse Annex, 1050 Monterey St,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Who: California Legal Rural Assistance (CRLA), Public Interest Law Project  
and Law Office of Babak Naficy

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California Legal Rural Assistance, Public Interest Law Project, and Law Office of Babak Naficy announce the filing of a lawsuit against the City of San Luis Obispo in federal court, seeking to stop the City's practice of criminalizing homelessness, unlawfully breaking up homeless encampments during a global pandemic, and illegally seizing and destroying homeless individuals' property in violation of their rights under the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Plaintiffs include City residents who while experiencing homelessness during a pandemic have been subjected to the City's unlawful and cruel practices and in the process, have suffered mental anguish, lost personal property — such as tents, tarps, blankets, life-saving medication, and documents —and have been denied the right to rest. Plaintiffs also include Hope's Village of SLO, a local nonprofit organization that provides services to individuals experiencing homelessness.

The City's practice of breaking up encampments is particularly egregious because the City's only homeless shelter, 40 Prado, is at best capable of housing only a fraction of the City's homeless population, and is not accessible to many individuals with PTSD or others disabilities that make it impossible for them to stay at 40 Prado.

The lawsuit comes after the City repeatedly broke up homeless camps, destroyed homeless individuals' property, and cited and arrested unhoused individuals, despite being capable of providing shelter to only a fraction of the City's unhoused individuals. The City has continued to threaten and to harass homeless individuals, who have no alternative housing or shelter, apparently seeking only to remove them from sight within City limits.

Evicting unhoused individuals from encampments during the pandemic without ensuring that there is alternative housing to the displaced unhoused individuals violates the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for addressing homeless encampments during the Pandemic.

The City's practices also constitute discrimination against individuals with disabilities in violation for federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Cal. Gov. Code section 11135 and other Federal anti-discrimination laws.

"We repeatedly engaged with the City's representatives in order to reach an amicable resolution of these intractable problems. Unfortunately, the City is unwilling to agree to any substantive changes" said Frank Kopcinski , Directing Attorney of CRLA-SLO.

"This is a human rights issue. We hope the lawsuit will stop the City's practice of harassing, citing, and arresting people who are trying to sleep on public land." – Becky Jorgeson, Hope's Village SLO

"How does the City expect us to get ahead if they keep taking our belongings?"  
– An Unhoused Individual

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Link to the lawsuit can be found [here](#)