

NH Coalition to End Homelessness

NHCEH Response to the Supreme Court's Johnson v Grants Pass Decision

06/27/2024

The NH Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH) was extremely disappointed to learn of the Supreme Court's decision on the matter of Johnson v Grants Pass earlier today. The criminalization of homelessness is not an effective nor humane practice in ending and preventing housing instability. It is NHCEH's hope that municipalities in NH will continue to focus on investing in sustainable, long-term solutions to the issue of homelessness, instead of expensive, counterproductive arrests of people who have nowhere else to go.

The development of affordable housing across NH is the key to ending the housing crisis in the state; according to NH Housing Authority's 2023 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment, over 23,000 rental units are needed to meet current demand and stabilize the rental housing market. In the meantime, the need for increased eviction and homelessness prevention initiatives cannot be overstated.

For those who are currently living unhoused, national best practices point to the importance of instilling connection and providing wrap-around care, rather than increasing barriers and furthering disconnection and distrust. NHCEH strongly encourages all decision makers who touch policies and practices impacting people experiencing homelessness to utilize strategies that are in alignment with the *19 Strategies for Communities to Address Encampments Humanely and Effectively*, published by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness ([a summary of which can be viewed here](#)).

Today's decision by the Supreme Court allows for the punishment of vulnerable human beings who are already experiencing the harsh reality of surviving unhoused. NHCEH remains in opposition to this approach, and will continue its mission to educate policymakers and the public about effective, evidence-based solutions and to advocate for their implementation across NH.