



July 25, 2024

LA City Controller Kenneth Mejia Condemns Governor Newsom's Executive Order Invoking Grants Pass Supreme Court Ruling to Direct Removal of Homeless Encampments

LOS ANGELES – Today, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order directing state agencies to clear homeless encampments following the Grants Pass v. Johnson Supreme Court decision, and urging local governments to “use substantial funding provided by the state to take similar action.”

The Controller's Office previously released a [detailed statement denouncing the Grants Pass Ruling](#) and maintains its position that punishing people for sleeping outside when there is no available shelter is both inhumane and does not result in meaningful reductions in homelessness or encampments.

It has been shown time and time again that clearing homeless encampments does not help reduce homelessness or encampment numbers over time, but only increases the number of unsheltered unhoused people. This month, RAND released a study that showed that in areas with frequent encampment clearings, encampments returned within months, and in Venice, the share of unhoused people living literally unsheltered (without a tent or vehicle) jumped from 20% to 46%. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) found that LA Municipal Code 41.18, which allows for encampment removal in certain areas, isn't effective at reducing encampments or helping to house people - while costing over \$3 million in two years, not including enforcement costs.

The Controller's Office believes that homeless encampment removal historically has equated to criminalization. It is cruel and unusual punishment for people without homes with nowhere to realistically go. As of 2023, [there were only approximately 16,000 shelter beds in the City of LA](#), for approximately 45,000 unhoused people. Even when there are available beds, our audit found that LAHSA's unreliable shelter bed data makes it next to impossible to find a bed.

Our Office again urges the Mayor and City Council to ban criminalizing homelessness. We also again urge the City Attorney to not enforce laws that criminalize homelessness while the legislative process runs its course. The City of Los Angeles must reject Governor Newsom's inhumane, unproven policy.

The City must prioritize preventing more people from falling into homelessness, and we must prioritize providing permanent housing with support services for our unhoused neighbors.