

In response to more propaganda from Sinclair, the worldwide right-wing media group dedicated to sowing division and promoting fringe arguments, we wanted to set the record straight. There's no "battle" for the soul of anything, save perhaps for a nation that has allowed its housing market to careen out of control and a lack of leadership willing to address it.

The causes of homelessness are clear; there is no mystery here. The core drivers of homelessness are economic, not personal. There is a national shortage of 7 million affordable units that has been increasing every year since 2011. The number of rental homes affordable to low- and moderate-income families in [King County has decreased by 36,000 in the last ten years. Meanwhile, the region saw the average rent increase by 47% between 2012 and 2017, and the average home price increase by 53%.](#) The loss of private market rental housing has left 41,000 individuals on fixed incomes and families making the minimum wage without an affordable apartment to rent anywhere in King County. Over 150,000 households in the region pay more than a third of their household income - sometimes far more - on housing expenses. So, we should be clear: this is not just about people experiencing homelessness. This crisis is about all of us. Housing is too expensive for all of us.

We should also remember that homelessness disproportionately impacts people of color, particularly Black and Native/Indigenous communities. This is no accident. Racism, too, is an economic position. The racial wealth gap, inclusive of earned wages, plays a significant role in who becomes homeless, as does our history of exclusionary zoning and land theft.

We should also not deny the reality that there is a crisis of unsheltered homelessness across the country and in King County. For this reason, we must continue to support programs that assist people in returning to permanent housing, including the expansion of voucher programs and increased development of permanent supportive housing. In the immediate, we must double down on (not terminate) programs that provide safe, dignity-centered, and trauma-informed temporary solutions. These solutions include non-congregate shelter, hotel/motel programs, and safe parking options.

We must avoid, at all costs, the criminalization of homelessness. Arrests, tickets, and involuntary commitments of homeless people have been proven to fail in every jurisdiction where they've been attempted. Additionally, many of these proposed actions violate people's civil and human rights. It is not acceptable to have one code of law for people with money and another for people without.

Finally, we must continue to listen to people experiencing homelessness. We know that those who are closest to the problem are those who have the solutions. The King

County Regional Homelessness Authority is a decisive step in that direction, incorporating those with lived expertise at every decision-making level. We must continue to move in that direction if we hope to make rapid progress on this crisis.

We invite everyone to get involved in creating the solution rather than letting a fringe minority, backed by a powerful media group, set the tone of the conversation. Here's how you can help:

- Support inclusive zoning efforts: <http://mrsc.org/Home/Stay-Informed/MRSC-Insight/November-2016/Inclusionary-Zoning-for-Affordable-Housing.aspx>
- Demand increased funding for rental voucher programs, for building more affordable homes, and for solutions to unsheltered homelessness: www.wliha.org
- Educate yourself about permanent supportive housing, the solution to chronic homelessness for people with disabilities: www.thirddoorcoalition.org/
- Support housing justice initiatives and tenant protections. Your rent is too high too! Resources and more information about housing issues are available at <https://regionalhomelesssystem.org/>
- Support the King County Regional Homelessness Authority.
- Oppose measures that criminalize homelessness or try to hide people experiencing homelessness rather than solving the problem. Learn more about how criminalization makes homelessness worse here: <https://law.seattleu.edu/centers-and-institutes/korematsu-center/initiatives/homeless-rights-advocacy-project>
- Call on state lawmakers, who convene in January, to invest in proven solutions to homelessness. Stay current with updates from the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance: www.wliha.org
- Demand Congress include homelessness resources, rent assistance, and a nationwide moratorium on evictions in any future coronavirus relief package. Learn more here: <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/housing-programs/primer>

Please join us to focus on solutions to homelessness:

CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)
Homeless Rights Advocacy Project
Lived Experience Coalition
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Innovation Service
National Homelessness Law Center
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness
Washington Low Income Housing Coalition
We Are In