

## Sonoma County Lived Experience and Advisory Planning Board (LEAP)



**Committee members:** Aaron Mello, Chair | Rebekah Sammet, Vice Chair/Minute Taker | Angie Sebring, Time Keeper | Peyton Forwood | Mary Ruffatto | Victoria Yanez | Fabiola Serrano-Gutierrez | James Di Stefano | Jessica Wolfe | Wendell Coleman | Chessy Etheridge

August 23, 2024

Dear Sonoma County Board of Supervisors,

The recent ruling by the Supreme Court in *Johnson v. Grants Pass* is a sad and cruel decision that will allow cities to punish people who are just trying to survive while living unsheltered. Please do not encourage law enforcement in Sonoma County to punish those that have no shelter! Despite this incredibly concerning ruling, we are hopeful that Sonoma County's towns and cities will be committed to finding better and more effective ways to address the housing crisis here.

Our unsheltered neighbors deserve the dignity and respect that are due to all citizens. The LEAP Board is committed to protecting the constitutional rights of those experiencing homelessness. Please join us in this commitment. We have several points to make regarding this and request your cooperation and support to:

- Ensure street outreach teams are alerted directly by law enforcement whenever encampment sweeps are planned.
- Help relocate campers as necessary, before police engage with encampments.
- Help expand and prioritize safe parking sites and safe camping sites as immediate refuges.
- Prevent issuing of fines for camping. Any court appearance by a camper should result in diversion to housing resources, not criminal penalties.
- Offer shelter or safe camping sites to anyone who is deemed to be illegally camping. Vouchers should be issued to County and State-owned campgrounds.

We thank you in advance for your support of these policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

The Sonoma County Lived Experience & Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board