



1831 K Street
Sacramento, CA 95811
Tel: (916) 504-5800
TTY: (800) 719-5798
Intake Line: (800) 776-5746
Fax: (916) 504-5901
www.disabilityrightsca.org

News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Pat McConahay, Communications Director
Disability Rights California
(916) 504-5938
Pat.McConahay@disabilityrightsca.org

Homeless people, many with disabilities, rally to demand San Diego end ticketing, impounding RVs

U.S. District Court to hear motion for preliminary injunction on July 26

(San Diego, CA – July 23, 2018) Homeless people, many with disabilities whose only available shelter is their RVs or other vehicles, gathered today at South Shores Boat Launch to demand San Diego to stop ticketing and impounding their vehicles over unpaid tickets.

Disability Rights California, the Racial Justice Coalition, Think Dignity, and a number of homeless people personally affected by the city's policies spoke at the rally.

People with RVs are being targeted under two ordinances that leave them no legal place to park their RVs at night. One prohibits parking an RV anywhere on city streets and logs between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. (SD Muni Code § 86.0139(a) and the second prohibiting vehicle habitation (SD Muni Code § 86.0137(f) that prohibits vehicle habitation. RV lots charge high rents and "safe lots" set up for homeless individuals exclude RVs.

A person's RV could be impounded after five unpaid tickets, which may result in that person living on the streets.

Speakers at today's rally said those targeted were often hard-working people who paid taxes all their lives before becoming disabled or falling on hard times. Valerie Grischy, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, was a licensed chiropractor with a successful career before getting into a serious car accident in 2009. Her only income is Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

"When I saw that I got less than \$900 a month on disability, I knew that I could either pay rent or pay for other necessities I need to live, but not both," Grischy said. "The only option that made any sense was to use my back SSI money to get a RV."

Others described the devastating impact of losing an RV that was in effect their home. Anna Stark, who is disabled, described having police impound her and her retired husband's RV in the middle of the night. They spent months on the street.

"We slept with cardboard under our sleeping bags in an alley," Stark said. "We got soaked when it rained. My husband caught pneumonia. It was a nightmare."

Disability Rights California, Fish & Richardson, and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty filed a class action lawsuit, *Bloom et al. vs. City of San Diego* in the U.S. District Court in November 2017. It challenges the city's ticketing and impoundment policies on grounds that they are unconstitutional and discriminate against people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A motion for preliminary injunction requesting a stop to the ticketing and impounding of vehicles during the pendency of the lawsuit is scheduled to be heard on July 26, 2018, before Judge Anthony Battaglia.

Ann Menasche, senior attorney with DRC and one of the attorneys representing plaintiffs in *Bloom*, said people with disabilities on fixed incomes cannot afford to pay these tickets.

"It makes no sense from a public health perspective to take people's RVs and throw them onto the streets," Menasche said. "Rather than solve the city's homelessness crisis, it places people's health and very lives in jeopardy and makes the situation that much worse."

Disability Rights California is a non-profit organization founded in 1978. We protect the rights of people with disabilities. Visit disabilityrightsca.org.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness.

The San Diego Housing Emergency Alliance, a grassroots coalition taking collective action to resolve the city's housing and homelessness disaster, sponsored the rally.