

News Release

For Immediate Release

February 4, 2019

Media Contact:

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

San Diego's homeless, many with disabilities, hopeful the city council will vote to repeal the Vehicle Habitation Ordinance

Homeless people with only their vehicles as shelter are hopeful the San Diego City Council will finally vote on February 5 to repeal the Vehicle Habitation Ordinance (VHO). The ordinance prohibits homeless people, many with disabilities, from living in their vehicles.

Disability Rights California (DRC) is one of the team of attorneys representing homeless individuals in a class action lawsuit, *Bloom et al. vs. City of San Diego*, challenging the VHO. The suit is pending in the U.S. District Court. The plaintiffs argue that the VHO is unconstitutional because it is vague, punishes, and endangers people who have no choice but to use their RVs or other vehicles for shelter. Many people with disabilities, seniors and other low-income people are priced out of the city's housing market. In addition, the ordinance discriminates under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) because it imposes a disproportionate harm on homeless people with disabilities.

In 2018, the court issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the city from enforcing the VHO. The police department has stopped doing so.

“I’m so grateful the city council finally decided to take action,” said Valerie Grischy, a plaintiff in the lawsuit. “The ticketing has been unbearable. All we ask is to be treated as human beings like everyone else.”

“If the VHO is repealed it will be a great victory for not only the plaintiffs, but for all who have suffered under this cruel and unjust ordinance,” said Ann Menasche, Senior Attorney for Disability Rights California and one of the attorneys in the Bloom litigation.

###

Disability Rights California is a non-profit organization founded in 1978. We protect the rights of people with disabilities. For more information, visit www.disabilityrightsca.org.