

Dear La Crosse City Council,

I understand that the Council is voting tonight on item 23-0673, which is set to ban unhoused folks from using the city's parks for basic survival activities. I am writing to urge the council to oppose the ordinance and vote against the ban.

La Crosse's unhoused population is not a hindrance and should be treated with just as much respect as anyone else. In any case, homelessness is not something that can be eradicated simply by banning the unhoused from public spaces. Banning the unhoused only works towards criminalizing the unhoused, who too often live at the intersection of poverty and marginalized identities.

Homelessness is a nuanced experience that is not simply marked by poor decisions. Those who are unhoused can arrive as unhoused in a variety of ways. I myself have been unhoused before, and that experience did not come because of my own decisions but because of the limited options that were available to me at the time. I was able to become housed again, not because someone told me not to be and I magically submitted. The supports that were available to me, such as local organizations like Cia Siab, Inc., were the reason I came out of homelessness.

My hope is that you as the Council are able to recognize the importance of centering those most impacted by social oppressions. I hope that you know that unhoused folks are not the enemy. I urge you to oppose this item that undermines the liberation of all our citizens. I urge you to make the right choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Yang