

Craig, Sondra

From: margy <margyfrazier1991@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 4:59 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Ordinance 23-0673

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City Council Members,

My name is Margy Krogman. I have lived in the City of La Crosse since 2015 - I currently live less than one block from Cameron Park. I am writing today in stark opposition to Ordinance 23-0673, which will effectively criminalize the act of being homeless in the City of La Crosse. To reduce the survival tactic of sleeping in a public space to "camping" is laughable at best, deeply, cruelly problematic at worst.

I would be interested in hearing from those council members in support of the Ordinance how they believe that adding a criminal charge to those struggling is meant to move these individuals towards success (and, of course, where exactly these individuals are allowed to exist). I ask you to imagine the barriers of not having a warm place to sleep, not having access to a shower (crucial for preparing for a job interview or a day at work) or a permanent address (vital for holding a bank account and getting a paycheck), and then - instead of being offered opportunities for success - to be cited for trespassing while trying to catch a few hours of rest.

Instead of attempting to sweep human beings under the proverbial rug, we must focus on providing spaces for these individuals to call home. I hear complaints that those who are unhoused are addicts, mentally ill or uninterested in help, thus being less worthy of our attention and care. I would remind the Council Members that addiction and mental illness are not issues that can be solved overnight. Additionally, requiring individuals to reach sobriety or balance their mental health before offering them services such as a safe place to live (thus increasing their chances of success in all areas of life) is ableist - and sets all parties up for failure.

This ordinance proposes (magically?) spiriting away some of our most vulnerable neighbors instead of doing the hard work of providing resources. Those who struggle with addiction, mental illness, and a lack of resources deserve love and care. To vilify individuals who have no safe space to call home (which the city has been gleefully doing lately, fencing off parks and hiring security detail for the Farmer's Market, reminding those who are unhoused that they are not welcome in our community) is inhumane. I am disappointed in this proposition, and hope that you will recognize how harmful it is to propose a half-baked solution to the problem of comfort for those more privileged individuals (who have not historically had any realistic threats posed by our unhoused communities) instead of addressing the root cause and ongoing ways to care for all of those who make up the City of La Crosse.

Above all else, our unhoused neighbors are human beings who have a right to exist peacefully. Please, do the right thing and honor the humanity of every person in the community - not just those who are fortunate enough to have a place to live.

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Margy Krogman (she/her)
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