

SB463.pdf

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Position: FAV



Senate Bill 463

Municipalities – Vagrancy – Repeal of Authority to Prohibit
In the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing on February 3, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid submits its testimony on SB463 at the request of Senator Muse.

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State’s low-income and vulnerable residents. Our 12 offices serve residents in each of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, including housing, family law, public benefits, bankruptcy and other debt collection matters, and criminal record expungements.

MLA urges a favorable report on SB463. No Marylander should face criminal penalties simply because they are unhoused. In 2024, the United States Supreme Court ruled that local governments can arrest or fine people for sleeping outside¹, even when adequate shelter is unavailable. This decision emboldened cities across the country to introduce over 320 bills criminalizing unhoused people². Nearly 220 have passed.

SB463 ensures Maryland communities will not continue to criminalize homelessness. Vagrant is a broad term used to describe someone who moves from place to place without a permanent job, home, or material resources³. SB463 removes vagrancy from activities a municipality may prohibit. Nuisance crimes like vagrancy have been used as a common tool against those experiencing homelessness⁴, and the passage of this bill would preserve the rights and human dignity of unhoused individuals.

Currently, Maryland law implicitly recognizes the inequity of criminalizing homelessness through our expungement statute which authorizes the expungement of nuisance-crime convictions after a three-year waiting period⁵. Other courts have found that convictions for life-sustaining activities constitute cruel and unusual punishment that violate due process protections⁶. Maryland has a shortage of over 120,000 homes for residents at 30 percent

¹*City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, 603 U.S. 520 (2024).

² *One Year Since Grants Pass: Tracking the Criminalization of Homelessness*, American Civil Liberties Union (Jan. 27, 2026)

³ Lij, *Vagrant*, US Law

⁴ Eric S. Tars, *Criminalization of Homelessness*, 2021 Advocates’ Guide (Apr. 14, 2021)

⁵ General Assembly of Maryland, *Article - Criminal Procedure, Section 10-105*, (Dec. 15, 2023)

⁶ *Martin v. City of Boise*, 920 F.3d 584, 590 (U.S. Ct. App. for the 9th Cir. 2019)

Area Median Income or below⁷. “Housing First” policies are also under attack at the federal level⁸, pulling resources away from housing opportunities for currently unhoused individuals.

Without the passage of SB463, Marylanders will face compounding challenges of housing scarcity, underfunded welfare programs, homelessness, and the burden of a criminal record, with its many collateral consequences.

Maryland Legal Aid assists hundreds of Marylanders with criminal record expungement each year. In 2025, one of these clients came to us with over 35 cases eligible for expungement, the majority of which were for minor crimes accumulated after years of living on the street without shelter. We successfully expunged 21 of those 35 cases. As MLA filed his expungements, the client worked on his sobriety, established secure housing, and enrolled in Montgomery College to work toward his associates degree. Free from these criminal charges, he is able to maintain these successes and remain sober and housed. It is through cases like this that we see firsthand that criminal charges get in the way of one's ability to secure housing, employment, educational opportunities, and continue to thrive.

With a budget already stretched past capacity, Maryland cannot forgo the opportunity to divert more individuals away from the costly carceral system and avoid unnecessary additional costs. It has been well established that enforcement of these practices is expensive⁹. One study from New York City¹⁰ reported a savings of \$1.3 billion if the city had housed people instead of incarcerating them. Another, from Charlotte, describes a savings of \$2.4 million over one year, after the city created a housing facility for the unhoused, rather than shuffling them between shelters, emergency rooms, and jails¹¹. Homelessness has a deep impact on the most intimate parts of a person's life and as such is a matter of social policy, not criminal law.

Maryland Legal Aid urges a **favorable report on SB463**. If you have any questions please contact Zafar Shah, Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing (zshah@mdlab.org), or Amanda Wisniewski, Community Outreach Manager (acwisniewski@mdlab.org)

⁷ *Maryland*, National Low Income Housing Coalition.

⁸ Ann Oliva, *Understanding Trump's Executive Order on Homelessness: Attacks on Housing First*, (Jan. 27, 2026)

⁹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Criminalizing Homelessness Worsens the Crisis*, (Feb. 4, 2025)

¹⁰ Bennett Allen & Michelle L Nolan, *Impact of a Homeless Encampment Closure on Crime Complaints in the Bronx, New York City, 2017: Implications for Municipal Policy*, 19 *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work* 356-366 (2022).

¹¹ Mark Price, *UNC Charlotte report: Homeless project saved city \$2.4 Million*, *Charlotte Observer*, (May 4, 2015).

Sponsor Testimony SB 463.pdf

Uploaded by: C. Anthony Muse

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 463 Municipalities – Vagrancy – Repeal of Authority to Prohibit

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

For the record, I am Senator C. Anthony Muse, representing the 26th Legislative District in Prince George's County. I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of **Senate Bill 463**, which repeals the authority of municipalities to prohibit vagrancy.

Senate Bill 463 addresses an outdated and overly broad power that has historically been enforced in a manner that is inconsistent with modern principles of fairness, equity, and constitutional due process. Vagrancy laws do not target harmful conduct; instead, they often criminalize status, poverty, and homelessness.

Maryland law already provides municipalities with ample authority to address legitimate public safety concerns. Municipalities retain the power to enforce laws related to disorderly conduct, nuisances, vice, gambling, and other conduct-based offenses. SB 463 does not weaken public safety or limit a municipality's ability to maintain order. Rather, it removes a redundant and problematic tool that has been shown to be susceptible to arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement.

Vagrancy prohibitions have historically been used to target individuals who are unhoused, unemployed, or simply present in public spaces without resources. Such laws do not solve the underlying challenges of homelessness or economic insecurity. Instead, they cycle vulnerable individuals through the criminal justice system, creating barriers to employment, housing, and stability.

Senate Bill 463 reflects a more thoughtful and modern approach. It recognizes that public safety is best achieved by addressing conduct that poses real harm, not by criminalizing people for existing in public spaces. Repealing municipal authority to prohibit vagrancy promotes consistency across jurisdictions and ensures that enforcement efforts are focused on behavior, not circumstance.

This bill imposes no cost on the State and does not interfere with municipal authority to govern responsibly. It simply aligns Maryland law with constitutional principles and best practices that prioritize fairness and effective governance.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 463**.

SB 463 Decriminalize Vagrancy BHSB FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



February 12, 2026

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 463 - Municipalities - Vagrancy - Repeal of Authority to Prohibit.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 463 - Municipalities - Vagrancy - Repeal of Authority to Prohibit. Vagrancy is not defined in state law but can be generally understood as the act of being unhoused without a source of income. This bill would remove the word “vagrancy” from the Local Government article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, preventing municipalities from further penalizing some of the most vulnerable populations in the state.

Over 30,000 people in Maryland experience homelessness per year¹, and around 1,500 people in Baltimore experience homelessness on a given night.² On top of being forced to navigate below-freezing temperatures without stable shelter, unhoused people are disproportionately harmed by the opioid crisis. In 2021, 65% of deaths in Maryland’s unhoused population were attributed to overdose or complications associated with drug use, 90% of which was from opioid use.³ There is clearly much work left to be done.

Arresting and penalizing unhoused people, who are already struggling to find food, shelter, and treatment, only furthers their suffering and sets them further back on the road to health, financial security, and recovery. Any arrests or fines would only create roadblocks to maintaining employment, finding housing, and seeking treatment. Penalizing homelessness is neither a way to end homelessness nor to address the opioid epidemic, and SB 463 recognizes this. Instead, Maryland can take a “housing first” approach to support its most vulnerable residents and take a leading role in the fight against opioid deaths.

State law should not create additional hurdles for some of our most vulnerable Marylanders.
BHSB urges the House Judiciary Committee to support SB 463.

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

Endnotes:

¹ Healthcare for the Homeless, *Homelessness in Maryland*. Available at: <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland#:~:text=Each%20year%20in%20Maryland%2C%2030%2C000%2B%20people%20experience%20homelessness.,poverty%2C%20housing%20and%20health%20is%20close%20and%20direct.>

¹ Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, *2023 Baltimore City Point-In-Time Count Report*. Available at: <https://homeless.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Baltimore%20City%202023%20PIT%20Count%20Report.pdf>

¹ Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness, *2020-2021 Report on Homelessness*. Available at: <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/HomelessServices/Documents/2021AnnualReport.pdf>

Health Care for the Homeless - 2026 FAV SB 463 - V

Uploaded by: Joanna Diamond

Position: FAV

HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

SB 463 - Municipalities - Vagrancy - Repeal of Authority to Prohibit

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 12, 2026



Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 463, which would repeal the authority of a municipality to prohibit vagrancy. This is an overdue and much-needed step towards decriminalizing homelessness.

The criminalization of homelessness is ineffective and cruel. People experiencing homelessness must live their private lives in public spaces. However, laws oftentimes penalize people for merely existing. According to National Homelessness Law Center, “[c]riminalization of homelessness is when law enforcement threatens or punishes people experiencing homelessness for doing things in public that every person has to do. This can include activities such as sleeping, resting, sheltering oneself, asking for donations, or simply existing in public places. It also includes arbitrarily or unfairly enforcing other laws, such as jaywalking or disorderly conduct against homeless individuals, and the practice of “sweeps” or displacing homeless people from outdoor public spaces through harassment, threats, and evictions from living in camps.”¹ At Health Care for the Homeless, we routinely see otherwise lawful behavior from our clients made a crime merely because our clients live on the streets.

Nuisance crimes, such as vagrancy, are a common tool against people experiencing homelessness. Nuisance crimes such as urination in public, soliciting or panhandling, loitering, vagrancy,² etc., are crimes oftentimes related to homelessness or extreme poverty.³ These ordinances grant authorities a broad tool for excluding visibly people who are poor experiencing homelessness from public places.⁴ Aside from these types of criminal charges not doing anything to prevent or end homelessness, criminal records for such offenses are common barriers to our clients receiving housing and jobs. Criminal records, including records of non-convictions, create almost insurmountable barriers to obtaining employment, housing, education, and other critical resources like social safety net programs.⁵ As a supportive housing services provider, we see the direct impact that a criminal record can have on an individual’s ability to obtain housing. SB 463 serves to eliminate such barriers to housing. As such, **SB 463 will help to reduce such barriers to employment and housing.**

We cannot continue down the path of criminalizing our most vulnerable residents. According to the 2020/2021 report from The Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness, over 23,000 people in Maryland experienced homelessness in the given year. More than 2,000 residents in Baltimore City alone experience

¹ National Homelessness Law Center, *Housing Not Handcuffs: Fact Sheet*, available at [criminalization-one-pager.pdf](https://homelesslaw.org/criminalization-one-pager.pdf) (homelesslaw.org).

² See Md. Code Ann., Crim. Proc. §10-105(a)(9).

³ *No Safe Place The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (Feb. 2013), available at https://www.nlchp.org/documents/No_Safe_Place 11 See resolution 104H.

⁴ National Homelessness Law Center, *Housing Not Handcuffs 2021: State Law Supplement* (Nov. 2021), page 11, available at <https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021-HNH-State-Crim-Supplement.pdf>.

⁵ See American Public Health Association, *Housing and Homelessness as a Public Health Issue* (Nov. 2017), available at <https://apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2018/01/18/housing-and-homelessness-as-a-public-health-issue>.

homelessness on any given day. We cannot continue to treat homelessness as a crime and must view homelessness as the housing and health crisis that it is. Homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Where someone who is stably housed could easily manage something like diabetes or hypertension, our providers see everyday that homelessness makes caring for these things exponentially harder and sometimes impossible. It is no surprise that the mortality rates among people experiencing homelessness are substantially higher than those of their housed counterparts – the life expectancy of those housed residents living in the wealthiest Maryland counties is 82, whereas for people experiencing homelessness, the life expectancy is just 48 years of age.

The solution to homelessness is not criminalization, it is housing. Studies show criminalization of homelessness costs 2-3 times as much as simply providing housing, criminalization actually harms the whole community by draining the resources we need to solve the root causes of homelessness.⁶ Instead, we must be investing in affordable housing, include permanent supportive housing⁷ and Housing First models.⁸ These investments have proven to end and prevent homelessness.⁹ Criminalizing homelessness has the opposite effect of erecting what can be insurmountable barriers to housing, employment and health.

Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 463 because laws criminalizing homelessness exacerbate homelessness and are bad for our communities. We urge a favorable report by the Committee.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, housing support services, and housing for over 11,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

⁶ National Homelessness Law Center, *Housing Not Handcuffs: Fact Sheet*, available at criminalization-one-pager.pdf (homelesslaw.org).

⁷ See [Permanent Supportive Housing - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

⁸ See [Housing First - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

⁹ See, for instance, the success of Maryland's investment in the supportive housing Medicaid waiver known as Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS). According to the [Hilltop Institute Report](#), ACIS has seen statistically significant decline in the average number of ED visits, avoidable ED visits, and inpatient admissions for ACIS participants in the year following enrollment in the program.

SB 463 - Municipalities – Vagrancy – Repeal of Aut

Uploaded by: Kirsten Downs

Position: FAV



NATASHA DARTIGUE
PUBLIC DEFENDER

KEITH LOTRIDGE
DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

ELIZABETH HILLIARD
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: Senate Bill 463 – Municipalities – Vagrancy – Repeal of Authority to Prohibit
FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender
POSITION: FAVORABLE
DATE: February 12, 2026

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD) urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 463, which repeals municipal authority to prohibit “vagrancy.”

Office of the Public Defender’s Support for SB 463

The MOPD is constitutionally mandated to provide legal representation to individuals who cannot afford counsel, overwhelmingly people who are poor, unhoused, or otherwise marginalized. Every day, our attorneys and staff represent Marylanders charged with low-level public-order offenses—loitering, trespass, disorderly conduct, and related charges—that operate much like vagrancy laws by targeting visible poverty and homelessness rather than specific harmful conduct.¹ Our clients are disproportionately impacted by the laws and policies that criminalize poverty, homelessness, and marginalization.²

Vagrancy laws historically criminalize the very conditions of poverty and homelessness—“wandering from place to place” without a home, job, or “visible means of support”—rather than acts that threaten public safety.³ The people and communities served by the MOPD are indigent, disproportionately Black, and disproportionately unhoused or housing-insecure; they are precisely the people swept into the criminal legal system by vagrancy-style enforcement. When municipalities criminalize sleeping in public and loitering, they criminalize basic survival and virtually guarantee that more of MOPD’s clients will face arrest, prosecution, and collateral consequences for simply being poor in public. SB 463 is a focused but important reform: it removes an archaic, status-based power that primarily harms unhoused persons and over-policed communities while leaving municipalities with ample authority to address genuine public-safety concerns.

The History of Vagrancy Laws

Vagrancy laws, rooted in English poor laws that punished people for being unhoused, unemployed, or “wandering” rather than for committing specific crimes, have long been used as a tool of social and labor control. Despite civil-rights-era constitutional scrutiny, the logic of vagrancy has persisted in Maryland in the form of broad municipal powers under Local Government § 5-207 to ‘prohibit vagrancy’—a power the General Assembly’s own Racial Equity Impact Statement defines as covering ‘sleeping in public, loitering, and begging/panhandling’—and in related ordinances that criminalize basic survival activities

¹ Maryland Office of the Public Defender, “Mission and Values,” accessed January 29, 2026, <https://opd.state.md.us/mission-and-values>.

² Maryland Office of the Public Defender, “Decarceration Initiative,” accessed January 29, 2026, <https://opd.state.md.us/decarceration-initiative>.

³ VAGRANCY, Black’s Law Dictionary (11th ed. 2019)

by unhoused people.⁴ SB 463 would remove only the vagrancy clause while leaving other public-safety powers intact. This targeted repeal recognizes that vagrancy, unlike the other enumerated powers, is inherently tied to criminalizing status and poverty rather than specific harmful conduct. This history of criminalizing status and poverty—rather than conduct—helps explain why vagrancy laws have consistently fallen hardest on Black and Brown people and unhoused communities.

Racial Equity and the Criminalization of Homelessness

Vagrancy laws were a key part of Jim Crow Laws and Black Codes, adopted by most former Confederate and slave-holding states after the Civil War and the 13th Amendment. Modeled on slave laws, these laws aimed to restrict the movement of emancipated Black Americans and push them into low-wage, debt-based labor.⁵ Vagrancy laws allowed for the arrest of Black people for minor infractions, enabling convict leasing—a system where Black men convicted of vagrancy were used as unpaid labor, effectively re-enslaving them.⁶ Black Codes sought to control Black labor and social behavior, leading to increased policing of Black communities. Laws against loitering and vagrancy formed the foundation of this social control. Maryland passed vagrancy and apprentice laws requiring Black people to obtain licenses from White people before doing business.⁷ In both historical and modern forms, vagrancy and related status offenses have functioned less as neutral tools of public order than as mechanisms for policing Black presence, poverty, and mobility. Vagrancy-style laws continue to affect Black people in Maryland disproportionately. Data from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, as referenced in the Maryland General Assembly’s Racial Equity Impact Statement for HB487/SB 484, indicate that Black people accounted for 57% of the state's unhoused population in 2024, despite representing only 29% of the overall population. In contrast, White individuals constituted 28% of the unhoused and about 47% of the total population.⁸ These disparities highlight that reforms aimed at decriminalizing homelessness could help alleviate the persistent challenges faced by Black people who experience homelessness and its root causes at significantly higher rates. Removing the power of local governments to criminalize vagrancy can be one tool in addressing the documented overrepresentation of Black Marylanders in this crisis.

Key Benefits of SB 463

The MOPD believes that passing SB 463 will yield several significant benefits:

- **Reducing the criminalization of poverty and homelessness:** By eliminating municipal authority to prohibit vagrancy, SB 463 restricts the use of status-based offenses that penalize people for being poor, unhoused, or visibly in need rather than for harmful conduct.
- **Enhancing constitutional compliance and fairness:** Repealing the vagrancy clause helps Maryland follow modern laws that protect the rights of all, especially marginalized groups

⁴ Maryland General Assembly, Department of Legislative Services. Unhoused Individuals – Rights, Civil Action, and Affirmative Defense (SB 484) Racial Equity Impact Note, 2025 Regular Session. Annapolis, MD: Department of Legislative Services, April 2, 2025.

⁵ Hansan, J.E. (2011). Jim Crow laws and racial segregation. Social Welfare History Project. Accessed January 29, 2026 from <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/civil-war-reconstruction/jim-crow-laws-andracial-segregation/>

⁶ Williams, Hubert, and Patrick V. Murphy. The evolving strategy of police: A minority view. No. 13. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, 1990.

⁷ Ranney, *In the Wake of Slavery* (2006), p. 17. "Between 1795 and 1810, Maryland enacted vagrancy laws similar to Delaware's; required free blacks to obtain certificates of good character from local officials in order to sell products or keep hunting equipment; and allowed its courts to apprentice children of destitute or unfit black parents to white masters."

⁸ Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. DHCD Presentation to the Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness. Presentation to the Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness, Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD, October 30, 2024.

- **Advancing racial equity:** SB 463 aims to reduce a key factor behind the persistent and cyclical homelessness faced by Black Marylanders.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 463 represents a crucial and long-overdue step toward ending the criminalization of poverty and homelessness in Maryland and aligning the State's laws with principles of constitutional and racial equity. The Maryland Office of the Public Defender believes that meaningful reform is not only appropriate but essential, particularly for the communities we serve. Because vagrancy-style enforcement targets exactly these communities, we strongly urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 463.

Submitted by: Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Government Relations Division.

Authored by: Kirsten Gettys Downs
Director of Systemic Reform
Maryland Office of the Public Defender
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Testimony in support of SB0463 - Unhoused Individu

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0463 RichardKaplowitz FAV

02/12/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0463- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Unhoused Individuals - Rights and Affirmative Defense

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0463, **Unhoused Individuals - Rights and Affirmative Defense**

The Oxford Dictionary defines vagrancy as “the state of living without a settled home or regular work, wandering from place to place and living by asking for money or food; life as a [vagrant](#).”

Maryland can be better than the Federal government, where President Trump issued an Executive Order that “*directs states to treat homelessness and mental illness as a crime, will make homelessness worse*”. The Open Society Foundations study found that:

...data suggests that "if you're poor and barely getting by, you're more likely to interact with the criminal justice system," says Dr. Thomas O'Toole, Program Officer for OSI-Baltimore. "And once you do, it's unlikely that you will receive the services you need to move from the street into stable housing. What's more, people who have been incarcerated have an even harder time finding employment and some public housing." ¹

My Jewish faith commands me to follow Isaiah 58:6-7 where the prophet addresses what the Lord requires from the congregation fasting in repentance:

Here is the sort of fast I want – releasing those unjustly bound, untying the thongs of the yoke, letting the oppressed go free, breaking every yoke...sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you see them, fulfilling your duty to your kinsmen!”

The United States Supreme Court has hardened their hearts and community hearts against the unsheltered. As reported by the National Alliance to End Homelessness

Last week, the Supreme Court issued its opinion ... which makes it easier for communities nationwide to fine, ticket or arrest people living unsheltered, even when there is no adequate shelter available. Specifically, the Supreme Court determined that the “cruel and unusual punishment” clause of the Eighth Amendment does not prohibit ... enforcing criminal punishments against people who are homeless for camping outside in the city...

¹ <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/newsroom/treating-homeless-criminals-condemns-poor-streets>

SB0463_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

To protect our unhoused neighbors, preserve support for best practices, and ultimately fend off these terrible policies, we need ... elected officials to do the right thing.²

This bill will tell Marylanders that criminalization of vagrancy is not permitted in Maryland. It states its purpose is to repeal the authority of a municipality to prohibit vagrancy.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0463.

² <https://endhomelessness.org/blog/the-supreme-court-rules-on-homelessness-what-it-all-means/>