



Senate Bill 484

Unhoused Individuals—Rights, Civil Action, and Affirmative Defense

Position: UNF

Date: **February 6, 2025**

To: **Judicial Proceedings**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our **strong opposition** for **Senate Bill 484 Unhoused Individuals—Rights, Civil Action, and Affirmative Defense**, due to its negative impact on local authority, public safety, and county resources. While we support efforts to address homelessness, this bill removes essential local government tools for maintaining public order and creates significant legal and financial burdens for counties.

Key Concerns for Caroline County:

- **Limits Local Authority Over Public Spaces**
SB 484 prevents counties from enforcing basic public safety and sanitation measures, repeals the ability to prohibit vagrancy, and restricts law enforcement from addressing encampments, even in hazardous locations.
- **Increases Legal and Financial Liability**
The bill allows unhoused individuals to sue counties and law enforcement for enforcing reasonable regulations, leading to higher legal costs and diverting resources from essential services.
- **Creates Public Health and Safety Issues**
The inability to regulate encampments, sanitation, and public health hazards could put both the unhoused and the public at risk, increasing strain on emergency services.
- **Restricts Law Enforcement and Public Safety Efforts**
SB 484 limits enforcement of trespassing and disorderly conduct laws, making it harder to address business and resident complaints or ensure safety in parks and public spaces.

While we support compassionate, effective solutions for homelessness, SB 484 fails to balance public safety with these goals. We urge the General Assembly to reject SB 484 and instead pursue collaborative policies that empower local governments to implement sustainable, well-managed solutions.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President