

How the Homeless Issue is Not Being Solved

By Gabrielle Dinardi



As I casually scrolled through the online news earlier, I became extremely disheartened when I came across a headline reading, “Santa Clarita Enacts New Restrictions on Homeless People: No Sitting on Sidewalks or Sleeping in Libraries.” This article, coming from the Los Angeles Times newspaper, explained that the City Council passed several new laws recently concerning the homeless

population of the city, including those about where they are legally allowed to sit or lay in public areas.

This story broke my heart, because the political officials enacting these new laws seem to have no sympathy for those that the new rules are going to be negatively impacting. These new laws are going to do nothing to actually help the homeless people in their own community. If these people were so concerned with the quantity and positioning of these homeless populations, you would think they would use their power as representatives of the people for the government in order to improve the quality of life for those suffering. Logan Smith, a city council candidate, echoed my exact thoughts as I continued to read the news journal: “Homeless people aren’t going to just leave Santa Clarita, if that’s your hope.”

Further into the article, the author writes that Santa Clarita does indeed have plans to help prevent and combat homelessness within the area, such as securing multiple plots of land in order to build a permanent shelter for those homeless individuals to be protected and rehabilitated. While this may be a decent solution for the long-term problem, individuals and even families are still struggling to survive in the city today. Making new, harsher rules will do nothing for these people who are still looking to get through every day, one day at a time. While I do agree that there is a need for some rules in order to keep everyone involved as safe as possible, for example; as the author contrasts the homeless issue in Santa Clarita to that of Los Angeles, it is noted that people are often found sleeping in the middle of the streets, I think that more focus has to be put on helping rather than just “cleaning up” the problem.

This is an issue of humanity, that should be dealt with directly rather than simply swept under the rug so that it is not so noticeable from an outside perspective. It takes an extreme point of privilege to be able to even consider that the way the city appears is more of a concern than the actual human beings- men, women, and children- that are going through struggles that you and I may not ever even be able to imagine. When people are told that they are not allowed to sit or lie in a particular area, it can make an already humiliatingly painful situation just that much worse. I know that it is time for the dehumanization of the homeless population to end, and I am going to work to ensure that I am a part of the solution rather than stand by and watch these tragedies continue to happen.

Resources

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-santa-clarita-homeless-laws-20180627-story.html>