

Hello, I am Alex Buzicky, and I work in social services assisting people experiencing homelessness. I have interacted with hundreds of people experiencing homelessness within my career of case management positions. I am opposing HB 2430.

Everyone has the right to safe and affordable housing, and everyone has the right to shelter. It is one of the most basic needs for survival. Making it a misdemeanor to sleep on state lands is systemically harmful to people experiencing homelessness.

I have met a lot of people who are experiencing homelessness who are also disabled and or elderly, and or are of low socio economic status. I have met several people who started experiencing homelessness because of a life circumstance that was outside of their control. I have seen several evictions where people did not have legal representation during their court cases, leading them to being homeless. I work with vulnerable populations including people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ, and people experiencing diseases that they need treatment for. You are sending the message that our most vulnerable populations are going to be committing crimes for simply existing and trying to survive.

I have worked in shelters when they are at maximum capacity. Where are people supposed to go when all available resources are exhausted if this bill passes? It is beneath our great state of Kansas to not harbor our most vulnerable populations while they experience homelessness. There are currently not enough resources to provide shelter to everyone in Kansas who is experiencing homelessness. Why would Kansas criminalize sleeping outside when Kansas can't provide everyone with safe and appropriate shelter?

Most people I encounter in my line of work who are experiencing homelessness have also experienced trauma. Having to talk to police can be a scary experience for several people. Going to a congregate living shelter can be a scary experience for several people. Are we really going to tell people who have experienced trauma that they have the option of committing a crime or going to a shelter? Even if this bill passes, and Even if everyone tried to take shelter in a legal way, the shelters might not be able to provide them shelter. People experiencing homelessness need to have the right to be able to choose where they take shelter.

Why would Kansas consider a bill that would create more barriers to getting people's needs met? Homelessness is not a crime, it is a traumatic experience. This bill is inhumane, and I oppose it so that our most vulnerable populations are not inherently being criminalized whilst they experience the trauma that came before, during, and or after they experienced homelessness.