

Auraria Supports the Right to Rest

Statement of Support

We the students, faculty, and staff on the Auraria Campus believe that everybody deserves a Right to Rest, regardless of economic or housing status. We are signing to express our adamant support of the Right to Rest Legislation, also known as the Homeless Bill of Rights.

We see the implementation of this legislation as a crucial component towards achieving and upholding the missions of Auraria and the three respective institutions, University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State University, and Community College of Denver. Given the history of the Auraria campus and the instrumental role that institutions of higher education play in shaping society, we view the support of the Homeless Bill of Rights as a statement of Auraria's commitment to fostering more equitable immediate and global communities.

It is vital to note that people experiencing homelessness are not simply an "other" group that we can easily look past or separate ourselves and institutions from. Students are experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, and as such, the criminalization of homelessness is also criminalizing our own community. Recent national surveys reveal that at least seven to fourteen percent of college students are experiencing homelessness, with two year colleges having the highest rates of housing insecurity and homelessness.

The Homeless Bill of Rights is about more than housing, it is fundamentally about the right to survive. Over the past three years the Auraria campus and its institutions lobbied against the Right to Rest legislation, taking a stance that is antithetical to the claims of diversity, inclusion, and community enrichment that said institutions claim to foster. Criminalizing necessary acts of survival such as resting, sleeping, and eating does not make our schools or society safer.

Despite the "official" stance of the Auraria campus, the purpose of this statement is to show the number of us of us within the Auraria community who understand criminalizing poverty and homelessness is unnecessary, expensive, and inhumane.

The Right to Rest Legislation would not impact campus enforcement of existing policy, it exclusively does the following:

THE RIGHT TO REST IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PROTECT ONESELF FROM THE ELEMENTS IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT OBSTRUCT THE USE OF OR ACCESS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

THE RIGHT TO EAT, SHARE, ACCEPT, OR GIVE FOOD IN ANY PUBLIC SPACE WHERE FOOD IS NOT PROHIBITED

THE RIGHT TO OCCUPY A PERSON'S OWN MOTOR VEHICLE OR OCCUPY A MOTOR VEHICLE WITH THE OWNER'S PERMISSION, PROVIDED THAT THE MOTOR VEHICLE IS LEGALLY PARKED ON PUBLIC PROPERTY OR PARKED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER;

THE RIGHT TO A REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY ON ONE'S PERSONAL PROPERTY IN PUBLIC SPACES TO THE SAME EXTENT AS PERSONAL PROPERTY IN A PRIVATE RESIDENCE OR OTHER PRIVATE PLACE.

We do not approve of our tuition dollars, student fees or tax dollars being used to lobby against the Right to Rest legislation. We ask that you join us in advocating for the rights of all people to survive. Public assets should be used for the public good.

For more information on the national statistics used please visit the two largest multi-state studies to date:

<http://www.wihopelab.com/publications/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf>

https://studentsagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Hunger_On_Campus.pdf

To learn more about research conducted at Metropolitan State University please visit:

<https://insider.msudenver.edu/ghosts-on-campus-the-plight-of-homeless-students/>

To learn more about the Right to Rest Legislation please visit:

<https://coloradohomelessbillofrights.org/about/>

This statement was drafted by members of a student organization named SHHARE (Student Hunger and Homelessness Advocacy Research and Education). If you have questions or would like to get involved please email us at homingforallauraria@gmail.com.