

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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2018 National Forum on the Human Right to Housing to Be Held in Washington, D.C.

(June 27, 2018, Washington, D.C.) – Today the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty will hold the 2018 National Forum on the Human Right to Housing in Washington, D.C., at the law offices of Sidley Austin LLP. With over 170 people from across the United States registered to attend, the annual Forum serves as a platform for key voices in activism, including those currently or formerly experiencing homelessness.

“As visible homelessness increases in cities across the country, the time is now to mobilize and advocate for solutions to the crisis,” said Maria Foscarinis, founder and executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. “The National Forum on the Human Right to Housing brings together advocates to discuss legal, legislative, and grassroots strategies focused on one goal: ending homelessness in America.”

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Housing Leilani Farha will give the Forum’s keynote speech. As the executive director of the NGO Canada Without Poverty, Farha works to promote a human rights-based approach to poverty. Before joining Canada Without Poverty, Farha was the executive director of the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation for twelve years. She is known internationally for her work on housing rights and women’s economic and social rights.

Farha’s keynote speech will be followed by breakout sessions and discussions with key leaders in grassroots activism, law enforcement and legal advocacy from across the country. With the goal of defining challenges and strategizing for future advocacy, breakout sessions span the topics of panhandling, renters’ rights, and encampments. A special youth roundtable will highlight the challenges facing homeless youth and strategies to address them. Represented organizations include Columbia Legal Services of Seattle, Washington; the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness; and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Beyond giving voice to those working to end homelessness, the Forum aims to catalyze momentum for the Housing Not Handcuffs campaign, which now has over 600 endorsing organizations and individuals committed to ending the criminalization of homelessness.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty believes that to end the crisis of homelessness, all persons experiencing homelessness must have access to housing, services and opportunities that allow them to live with dignity and get back on their feet, rather than being criminalized for life-sustaining activities such as sleeping or panhandling. The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty's 2016 report, [*Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*](#), analyzes laws in 187 cities that criminalize homelessness and offers constructive alternative policies to federal, state, and local governments on how to best address visible homelessness in a sensible, humane and legal way.

Sponsors of the 2018 National Forum on the Human Right to Housing include the Microsoft Corporation, United Airlines, Perkins Coie LLP, Fish & Richardson P.C., and host Sidley Austin LLP.

The [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty \(the Law Center\)](#) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.