

# IN JUST TIMES

*a publication of the*

NATIONAL LAW CENTER  
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY



*Changing Laws, Changing Lives*

October 2015

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## The 2015 McKinney-Vento Awards are here!

Click to attend this year's event - a night to celebrate this year's honorees and all of our amazing supporters!

Dear Friends,

**This is an especially exciting time for the Law Center, as we build momentum in our advocacy, and prepare for our annual [McKinney-Vento Awards](#) reception on October 27 to celebrate successes, and raise funds to continue our work.**



Maria Foscarinis  
Executive Director

As September ended, we were thrilled to host a special briefing call for our supporters, featuring Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and head of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, Vanita Gupta, who spoke about the DoJ's [recent brief filed](#) in a Law Center case taking a strong position against the criminalization of homelessness.

Also on the call was Allen Gardner, who is leading the litigation at issue and a partner at **Latham & Watkins**, one of the Law Center's most important pro bono law firm partners. Latham has provided extraordinary support, especially to our advocacy challenging the criminalization of homelessness, and we are especially pleased to be honoring the firm with our [Pro Bono Counsel award](#) at our McKinney-Vento Awards reception. Law Center Vice-Chair Bruce Rosenblum, currently a managing director at The Carlyle Group and formerly a Latham partner, will present the award.

**As we fight *against* criminalization, we also fight *for* solutions to end and prevent homelessness.** Housing is critical to such solutions, and **U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown** has been a vigorous supporter as we advocate to protect vulnerable tenants from homelessness, and to end homelessness for veterans. We are excited to be honoring Senator Brown with our [Bruce F. Vento](#) award. Sue Vento, Bruce's widow, will travel from St. Paul, MN to present the award.

One of our primary challenges in ending and preventing homelessness is building the political will to support and fund proven solutions such as housing first. Last fall, **Sports Illustrated** devoted an important [cover story to young homeless athletes](#) - challenging stereotypes and reaching a new and broad audience. For this bold and courageous reporting we are honoring SI with our [Stewart B. McKinney Award](#).

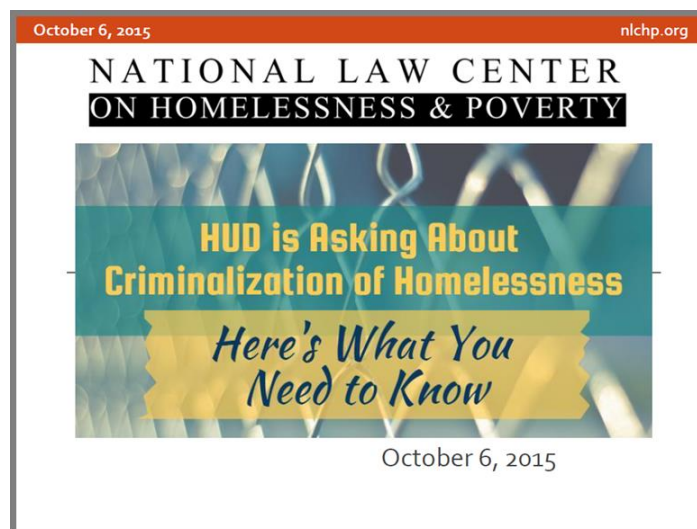
We are also thrilled to be honoring **Bobby Limon**, one of the young athletes profiled in the story, with this year's [Personal Achievement Award](#). We had helped Bobby when he was a high school student - and at risk of losing his chance for a football scholarship to college due to his homelessness. We're thrilled that he is now thriving as a college athlete and student.

I hope you'll support and [join us](#) on **October 27<sup>th</sup>** as we take an evening to recognize inspiring leadership, celebrate success, and raise critical resources for our work!



## Advocacy Victory: Incentivizing Change

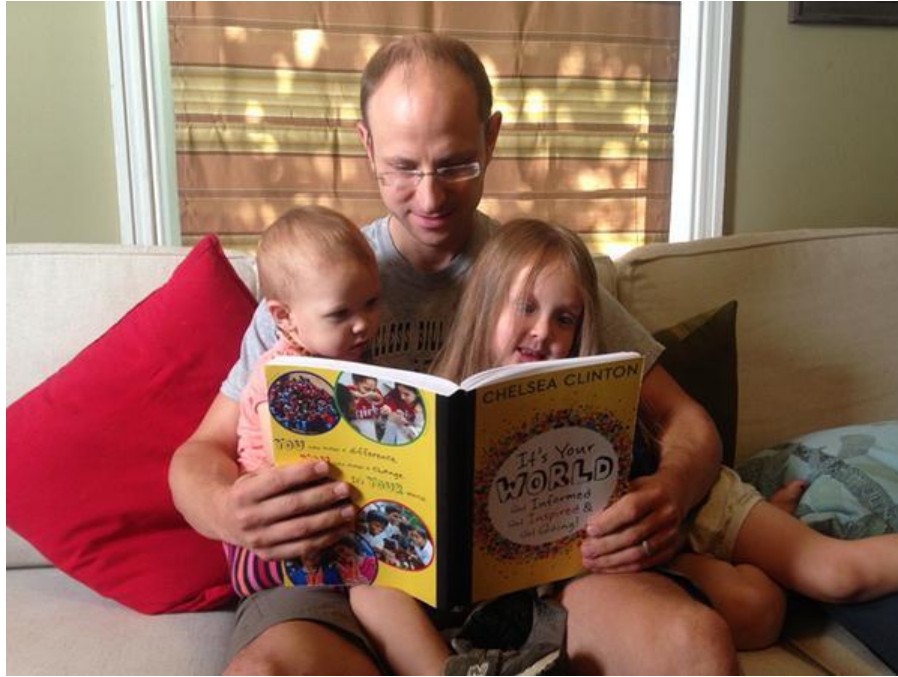
**Knowing that local governments can be strongly incentivized through federal funds**, the Law Center has long been advocating with HUD for funding guidelines to tie its funds to local communities' de-criminalization of homelessness. [And this fall it happened](#). HUD's competitive grant process for local communities in the Continuum of Care has a question worth up to 2 points asking applicants to explain efforts to prevent or reduce criminalization. Communities around the country rely on these funds and every point counts, **so this is very significant**. It's a major step forward in the Law Center's advocacy for federal leadership and action to end the criminalization of homelessness - and to support housing and other construction solutions instead.



To help local service providers and advocates turn this new question into positive change, the Law Center offered a webinar on October 6, entitled, "**HUD is Asking About the Criminalization of Homelessness: Here's What You Need to Know**". You can still watch the archived version, [here](#).

## #ItsYourWorld!

The Law Center featured in Chelsea Clinton's new inspirational call to action for youth,  
"It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired, & Get Going!"



top photo: Eric Tars, Law Center Senior Attorney, reading to his girls  
bottom left photo: Chelsea Clinton's inscription in our copy of her new book  
bottom right photo: Chelsea Clinton at "It's Your World" book signing





## Protecting Homeless Students' Access to School and School Activities



photo: Bobby Limon and his family

**Homelessness has many faces.** Sports Illustrated, winner of the 2015 Stewart B. McKinney Award, recently [featured](#) Bobby Limon's struggle when his family experienced homelessness. Bobby was an aspiring high school football player when his family reached out to the Law Center for legal help. Homelessness put his health and his eligibility to continue playing football in jeopardy. **Despite federal and state protections, students like Bobby, who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act, continue to encounter barriers to staying and participating in school.**

Schools should remember that their legal obligations do not stop after enrolling the student. It is important for schools to ensure that homeless students have access not only to a continuous and stable education, but also to full participation in school – including transportation and involvement in school sports and extracurricular activities. These activities can be a positive force in the lives of students experiencing homelessness, helping them stay engaged and even obtain college scholarships. Under the law, schools must facilitate access to such activities for students experiencing homelessness.

Thanks in part to the Law Center's advocacy efforts, **Bobby is thriving in college today, and is the recipient of our 2015 Personal Achievement Award.**

For more information on how to ensure schools provide homeless students equal access to extracurricular activities, check out [No Barriers: A Legal Advocate's Guide to Ensuring Compliance with the Education Program of the McKinney-Vento Act](#), a manual offering advocacy tools and compliance resources needed to effectively assist children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. An accompanying webinar is also available [here](#).

## Thank You to All of Our Pro Bono Partners!



October 25th - 31st is **Pro Bono Week**, which is a perfect time to thank our fantastic pro bono partners! The Law Center's work is made possible by the support of law firms and corporations sharing their time, expertise, and resources to help the Law Center use the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness. We would especially like to thank our [LEAP member firms](#), who form the very core of support for the Law Center through financial support and placement of 75% of all Law Center pro bono matters.

*Thank you to all of our pro bono partners!*

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## Our 2014 Annual Report!



Please read our [2014 Annual Report](#) if you haven't already done so! This report documents all of our amazing success that was only possible because our strong network of supporters and advocates. Thank you for all that you do, because without it, we wouldn't be able to do what we do best - fight for the rights of our country's most vulnerable.

## **Changing Laws. Changing Lives.**

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 end and prevent 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.

[www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)