

To: Evergreen College, MPA Program
From: Kelsey Longrie
RE: Public Policy Memo- Encampment Ordinance

To the Evergreen Faculty,

As a long time Tacoma resident, I am passionate about creating a more equitable and just community. In recent years, Tacoma has seen an increase in community members facing homelessness. In Peirce County, it is estimated that there are 4,300 individuals who are homeless (Pierce County, 2022). Recently, city leaders passed a new ordinance banning encampments to be within a 10 block radius from homeless shelters. This ban went into effect on November 14, 2022 and those found in violation of the law will face a \$250 fine and 30 days of jail time (Horne, 2022).

The goal of this policy is to get individuals into shelters as soon as possible to reduce inhumane living condition (Horne, 2022). Unfortunately, the new encampment law drafted will do the exact opposite as what Tacoma leaders are working towards solving. If the homeless community is not allowed to live near a homeless shelter, it makes it harder for individuals to receive services (especially for those who have mobility and/or transportation challenges). Even if a shelter does not have enough spare beds, community members can still receive essential services needed to survive and to live a healthier life. It is clear that the encampment ordinance is inequitable and unethical.

A better solution to this problem would be to repeal the ordinance. If people are closer to shelters, it will reduce barriers to receive services. Tacoma leaders will also need to revisit and revise the new 2023 budget and strategic plan (Rivera, 2022) in order to allocate more time to review current laws and drafted ordinances with a critical lens to insure that each law in place helps individuals move towards equitable access. With a holistic and ethical approach to our homeless population, we will have a more equitable and robust community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelsey Longrie".

Kelsey Longrie

Works Cited

Citation 1

Pierce County. "Homelessness in Pierce County." *Homelessness in Pierce County | Pierce County, WA - Official Website*, 2022, <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7405/Homelessness-in-Pierce-County>.

Citation 2

Paul Rivera, K. O. M. O. N. R. (2022, November 3). *Tacoma's budget looks to increase funding for police, expanding homelessness services*. KOMO. Retrieved November 8, 2022, from <https://komonews.com/news/local/tacoma-washington-city-council-2023-budget-increasing-funding-police-department-homeless-services-rescue-mission-city-government-taxpayers>

Citation 3

Horne, D. (2022, November 14). *Tacoma homeless encampment ban goes into effect Monday*. KIRO 7 News Seattle. Retrieved December 3, 2022, from <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/tacoma-homeless-encampment-ban-goes-into-effect-monday/VJWM2TFU6FG7DBAKJ6XUPERFGI>