

# NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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## **Government Receives a “D” on Report Card in Response to Homelessness *Progress On Criminalization of Homelessness and Fair Housing Undermined By Continued Failure on Affordable Housing***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) (the Law Center) issued [Grading the U.S. Response to Homelessness](#), its annual report card on the human right to housing in the U.S. The report card praises the progress of the federal government this year in addressing the criminalization of homelessness and in some areas to promote fair housing, but condemns its ongoing failure to stem the tide of homelessness by ensuring adequate, affordable housing is available to all, resulting in an overall grade of “D.”

“This year, we are happy to recognize the federal government’s continued strong, cross-agency push against the criminalization of homelessness,” said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the Law Center. “But homelessness continues to grow in our nation’s largest cities because we are not doing enough to address the underlying affordability crisis.”

The Law Center’s report highlights the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development for several actions, including:

- Increasing the points on its funding application credited to communities who can demonstrate they are taking steps to end the criminalization of homelessness;
- Publishing final regulations to help prevent homelessness for victims of domestic violence and address discrimination against transgender individuals in accessing shelter;
- Issuing guidance on limiting the use of criminal records in housing decisions;
- Creating guidance and tools to address racial segregation in housing.

The report card also notes other important steps taken by the White House and U.S. Departments of Justice and Education in addressing the criminalization of homelessness.

But Congress' and the Administration's persistent failure to address the housing affordability crisis, which sees 1 in 4 renters paying more than 50% of their income on housing, offsets many of these gains.

Every year, the Law Center marks [Human Rights Day](#) (December 10) by publishing its report card, measuring federal progress in its response to homelessness against international standards under the human right to housing. While making significant progress on its grade on criminalization, the federal government continues to fall short in many other areas, receiving failing "F" grades in Renters Security of Tenure and Affordability, and "D" grades in several other areas.

"The Obama Administration has taken some major steps toward making sure homeless people are not punished for simply trying to survive," explained Eric Tars, Senior Attorney at the Law Center and primary author of the report. "We hope the Trump Administration and the incoming Congress follow our recommendations to ensure everyone can enjoy the basic human dignity that comes with a safe, adequate place to live."

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*The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty ([www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)) 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.*