

“Sweeps,” What are They ?

“Sweeps” Are **Raids** that enforce the Redding/Shasta **ordinances against Camping** at any site, under any condition except at a **Licensed Campground**.

The aim of “Sweeping” was to keep the poorest of the poor, Open air Campers and Street Homeless, “on the move,” so as to prevent their invoking “**Squatter’s Rights**” to claim public or undeveloped private land under specified conditions. Their **advance notice** time was constantly reduced, giving them little, if any, time to pack up and relocate. The ordinances became an **excuse to harass them with unscheduled “raids”** demanding they move immediately, often at night or in bad weather.

Also, since all camping or sleeping in public was “illegal”, Law Enforcement began to levy **fines and jail sentences** for utilizing tents, blankets, etc to survive exposure to weather conditions and for actions that were necessary for human functions. Peeing in public became “indecent exposure.” **Warrants for arrest** were issued for failure to appear in court.

Misdemeanors were escalated to felonies and felonies went on permanent records, disqualifying them for housing, etc. When they ran up **unpaid fines**, they were sent to jail. If law enforcement did not dump their life sustaining possessions in front of them, they “**confiscated**” them, along with their **cell phones** as “**evidence**,”(their only means of calling for help if/when attacked or raided. They still are not given **specific “receipts**, for their possessions, only **generic instructions** of a number to call to make an appointment to claim their possessions, knowing that most homeless would not **expose themselves to arrest** for a multitude of felonies accrued, ignorer to make a claim. If their record was clean, the claiming **procedure** became too complicated to navigate, often ending up with “lost” items, or “no record” of their confiscation.

Punishments kept escalating for contrived reasons which only created loss upon loss of life support necessities. **Years** Of having their Basic Survival Needs **Pilfered by Police**, has generated anger and backfired with and an increase of **crime against the public**, if not simple negligence and **unintended dangers** to their wellbeing.

Crime against other homeless escalated. I **personally know** of one beloved team member who was murdered in his sleep, for his blanket, and another who hung himself in **despair** of ever escaping the cycle. Or others carelessly overdosed because it no longer mattered if they did not wake up for another day of suffering.

If, for any reason a person left their camp site, for even a short time, in a publicly accessible site, it would be considered “**abandoned**” and forfeit to Law Enforcement. If an open camper was **defiant enough to sue** an officer for demeaning language, behavior or excessive force, during a “**relocation**” **enforcement**, they became targets for retaliation. If they had to leave their sites unattended to **show for court**, they would return and find everything gone.

For Loss Of Hope For Better. Gentle Souls Turned To Drug Dealing to finance their personal **Escape Plan** from the Black Hole of danger and despair.

Now, the CA. LAW SB634 that prohibits such practices is our Bridge to correcting years of failed and dehumanizing policies and practices.