

For Release Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Advocates file appeal in case against Burien's banishment law

Seattle, WA Tuesday, June 17, 2025 — On Friday, June 13, 2025, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness and co-plaintiffs filed a notice of appeal to the Washington State Appeals Court in response to the trial court ruling in *Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, et al vs. City of Burien*. That ruling upheld Burien's law that prohibits anyone from sleeping in any public place at any time.

Represented by Northwest Justice Project, plaintiffs brought their case against the City of Burien's banishment ordinance in January 2024. Burien officials have revised the original ordinance several times, most recently on an emergency basis four days before Superior Court Judge Michael Ryan heard arguments for summary judgment on February 14, 2025.

"In filing this appeal, we seek to affirm that all Washingtonians are protected by our state constitution. We also pay respect to our co-plaintiffs Beth and Alex Hale and Carlo Paz, who, despite living in extremely difficult circumstances, continue to seek justice through the long process of legal advocacy," said Alison Eisinger, Director of the Coalition on Homelessness.

On May 30, 2025, Beth Hale, a co-plaintiff in this case, passed away. She was a steadfast advocate for decency, respect, and kindness. Beth, her husband Alex, and their dog were well-known and beloved members of the Burien community.

"Beth's untimely death reminds us that real human beings bear the brutal costs of collective failure to respond to homelessness with urgency and enough resources," Eisinger said. "The Coalition on Homelessness joined this lawsuit because any law that excludes people from their community must be challenged. Washington state's constitution must apply to all who live

here, regardless of how much money we have in our pockets, or whether we have a place to lay our heads and call home.”

In issuing his May 15, 2025, decision, Judge Ryan noted that “nothing in this ruling should be construed as endorsement of the wisdom or efficacy of [Burien’s] chosen method of regulation.”

“How municipalities attempt to address the problems of affordable housing and provide services to residents who are homeless are matters of policy--but those policies cannot override the constitutional rights of every Washington resident,” said lead attorney Scott Crain of the Northwest Justice Project. “This is where the courts must step in.”

###

The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness mobilizes our community to challenge systemic causes of homelessness and advocate for housing justice. Grounded in the work of more than 50 member organizations that provide housing, shelter, and services in King County, the Coalition is an informed and independent leader in the region. www.homelessinfo.org

For press inquiries:

Danielle Palmer-Friedman
Seattle/King County Coalition on
Homelessness
425-949-2306
danielle@homelessinfo.org

Scott Crain
Northwest Justice Project
Director of Advocacy
(206) 707-0900
scottc@nwjustice.org