



NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Mike Hilgers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General Hilgers Urges U.S. Supreme Court to Empower States to Address Homelessness

LINCOLN - Attorney General Hilgers joined a coalition of 20 states in filing an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court urging the Court to grant a writ of certiorari to review the Ninth Circuit's widely criticized decision in *Johnson v. City of Grants Pass*, which held that the Constitution includes an individual right to sleep and camp on sidewalks, playgrounds, and other public lands. The decision has been disastrous for state and local governments, preventing them from meaningfully addressing the homelessness crisis.

The Ninth Circuit's flawed decision means that 40% of the country—comprising 65 million people and hundreds of communities—is prevented from enforcing commonplace anti-camping ordinances. This has led to unchecked public encampments, which have unleashed a host of public health and safety crises. Diseases such as typhus, shigella, and trench fever are resurfacing in these encampments. Encampments have led to the unsightly and unsanitary smearing of sidewalks, paths, and playgrounds with human fecal matter, discarded needles, and other biohazards.

The coalition of Attorneys General is calling on the Supreme Court to correct the Ninth Circuit's unprecedented decision and return power to state and local governments to address homelessness. Homelessness is a distinctly local issue, and the U.S. Constitution leaves such matters to state and local governments. State and local governments need the freedom to protect their communities from the adverse public health and safety risks posed by surging homelessness.

Attorneys General from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia also joined the brief led by Idaho and Montana.

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Court Filing Attached

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