

Jeffery Logan
Grace-Street Ministry

My name is Rev. Jeffery Logan and I'm the Executive Director of Grace-Street Ministry, a homeless outreach ministry based in Portland, Maine. For the past six years, I've gone out on the streets three days a week and provided pastoral care and small material items to the community of the unhoused.

In that capacity, I've seen firsthand how absurd the criminalization of certain behaviors is -- behaviors that we all might engage in, but without the safe anonymity of being housed. Whether it's drinking in public, sleeping on a park bench, or simply sitting on the curb, I've know people to be arrested and carted off to Cumberland County Jail, even though they have posed no risk to themselves or others.

This kind of disruption is not just an inconvenience for the homeless. It adds to the fines that they have no means to pay (leading to further arrests), and it can negatively impact housing and employment.

I ask you to please support this bill, and give members of the unhoused community the best chance possible to break the cycle of homelessness.