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KINGS COUNTY INTRODUCES NEW ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS UNLAWFUL CAMPING AND PUBLIC SAFETY



HANFORD, CA – During the **March 11, 2025**, Kings County Board of Supervisors meeting, the board introduced a new ordinance aimed at addressing unlawful camping and the obstruction of public rights-of-way. The **Unlawful Camping and Obstruction of Public Rights-of-Way Ordinance** is designed to protect public health, safety, and property while balancing the need for compassionate solutions for those experiencing homelessness.

The ordinance comes in response to a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, which affirmed that local governments can enforce civil and criminal penalties for camping on public land without violating the Eighth Amendment. [Kings County's](#) new policy includes an abatement plan to address encampments while ensuring compliance with state and federal laws.

The ordinance prohibits camping on public property and obstructing public rights-of-way, such as sidewalks and roads, except in designated areas. It also establishes a framework for non-criminal enforcement, including referrals to community-based services like mental [health](#) support, housing assistance, and job training programs.

Alex Walker, Administrative Analyst for [Kings County](#), emphasized the ordinance's dual focus on public safety and compassion. "This [ordinance is about maintaining safe and](#)



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[accessible public spaces](#) while also connecting individuals with the resources they need to rebuild their lives," Walker said.

The ordinance includes a 90-day storage policy for personal belongings seized during abatement efforts, ensuring that individuals have the opportunity to reclaim their property. Items deemed hazardous or unsanitary, such as soiled bedding or trash, will not be [stored](#).

Public Comment Highlights Compassionate Concerns

During the [public comment](#) portion of the meeting, Claire Fitiasi urged the board to reconsider punitive measures against unhoused individuals. "Homelessness is not a [crime](#). It is a crisis that requires compassionate, holistic solutions," Fitiasi said. She emphasized the need for accessible housing, mental health services, and job training programs instead of fines or criminal penalties.

Fitiasi's comments resonated with several board members, who acknowledged the complexity of the issue. Supervisor Rusty Robinson noted, "This ordinance is just one piece of a much larger puzzle. We need to continue working [toward long-term](#) solutions that address the root causes of homelessness."

The ordinance is set to take effect on **April 17, 2025**, following a second reading and final adoption at the board's next meeting on **March 18, 2025**.