



AIDS United Statement on Trump Administration Executive Order Targeting Homeless Individuals and People Living With Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder

This executive order are not designed to help those who are homeless, living with mental illness or living with a substance use disorder.

July 28, 2025 By [AIDS United](#)

There is an old adage that says that the worth of a nation can be derived not from how it treats those who are blessed with abundance, but by how it treats the vulnerable and suffering among us. If there is any truth in that proverb, then it cannot be denied that America is in danger of losing its value.

On July 24th, 2025, President Trump released an executive order entitled, “Ending Crime and Disorder On America’s Streets.” Despite the title of the executive order, there is no mention of any violent crime or property crime within it. There are no provisions directed toward preventing homicides or armed robberies. The “crimes” with which this executive order is concerned are those that are born of societal neglect, economic inequity, trauma and heredity. It focuses on the crime of not having enough money to afford a place to live; the crime of being born with a severe and persistent mental illness; the crime of addiction.

The actions contained within this executive order are not designed to help those who are homeless, living with mental illness, or living with a substance use disorder. They are instead designed to punish, demonize, and disappear these populations through surveillance, coercion and brute force. Using significantly increased civil commitment authorities, failed zero tolerance policies demanding abstinence, and the weaponization of our own health data, this Administration is seeking to criminalize the mere existence of millions of Americans.

At AIDS United, we often frame federal policies within the context of how they will help or hurt our ability to end the HIV epidemic. In this respect, this executive order and its attacks on evidence-based harm reduction and Housing First policies will surely lead to more HIV transmissions and worse health outcomes for people living with and affected by HIV. But the impacts of this

executive order cannot be confined to the impact on people who use drugs or those living with HIV.

The proposals in this executive order will strip millions of people of their basic human rights and agency. It will abandon the pursuit of genuine and lasting solutions to some of the most pressing crises facing our society and rob us of the opportunity to become the nation we have always strived to be. Locking up people who cannot afford to keep a roof over their head or who are suffering from mental health issues or substance use disorder will not provide the most vulnerable among us with opportunity. Instead it will only serve to encase our already unacceptable inequities in cement, solidifying the stigmatization and othering of these groups.

It is time for us to invest in the possibilities of what people can become by working with them to help them to be their best selves. We cannot solve the homelessness or overdose crises by providing people with ironclad ultimatums that offer only abstinence or incarceration. We must not fall into the trap of believing that coerced treatment and homeless encampment sweeps will do anything more than traumatize people in service of a temporary and untenable solution. People need health care. They need affordable and accessible housing. And they need mental health and substance use disorder services that meet them where they're at and provide the best opportunity for sustained success and a better life. This executive order does not address these needs.

We cannot allow the deeply destructive policies in this executive order to be enacted across our nation. Not only will they further fray a social safety net that is already at a breaking point and deprive all of us from the real opportunity we have to end HIV in the U.S. through programming focused on dignity and support, but they will strip millions of people of the inalienable rights and opportunities which have been promised to all of us, and that they are owed.

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