

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Statement by UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative Director Dr. Margot Kushel  
on the Supreme Court’s Decision in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson***

SAN FRANCISCO (June 28, 2024) – Following is a statement by Dr. Margot Kushel, MD, Director of the [Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative](#) (BHHI) at the University of California, San Francisco on the Supreme Court’s decision in [City of Grants Pass v. Johnson](#).

“Today, the Supreme Court’s decision will allow state and local governments to make it a crime for people experiencing homelessness to rest in public when they have nowhere else to go—despite the fact that sleeping and resting are basic human needs. This is an extreme decision that will have a dangerous and negative impact on people experiencing homelessness and do nothing to end homelessness.

“Housing solves homelessness—fines and jails do not. These punitive measures exacerbate the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness. America is experiencing the most profound housing crisis it has had in decades, which has left too many people without the safety and security of home. Federal and state policymakers must make the difficult choices necessary to solve our housing crisis.

“By increasing access to affordable housing for extremely low-income households, expanding targeted homelessness prevention, providing support to match the behavioral health needs of the population, and increasing household incomes, we could ensure that everyone has the safety and security of home and no one is forced to sleep outside. We know that the American people want the homelessness crisis solved and we know that only access to affordable housing for everyone will do that. Today, the Supreme Court has moved us toward a future where people can be arrested for sleeping.

“BHHI calls on state, county, and city leaders to reject this decision and the false assertion that they have no other option than to punish people for being forced to live their lives in public.”

Dr. Kushel signed on to an [amicus brief filed in the case](#).

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**About UCSF BHHI**

[The UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative](#) provides accurate, timely policy-oriented research about homelessness for local, state, and national policymakers and practitioners. Funded by a generous gift from Marc and Lynne Benioff and based at the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations, UCSF BHHI is a trusted source for evidence-based practice, policy, and scalable solutions—turning evidence into action to prevent and end homelessness.

**About Dr. Margot Kushel**

[Margot Kushel, MD](#), is Professor of Medicine at UCSF, Division Chief of the Center for Vulnerable Populations, and Director of the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. Her research focuses on reducing the burden of homelessness on health through examining efforts to prevent and end homelessness and mitigating its effects on health care outcomes. She is a primary care physician at ZSFG's Richard H. Fine People's Clinic.

Dr. Kushel is the principal investigator of [\*The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness\*](#) (CASPEH), the largest representative study of homelessness in the United States since the mid-1990s. Released in June 2023, CASPEH provides a comprehensive look at the causes and consequences of homelessness in California and recommends policy changes to shape programs in response.