

# Gloria Johnson Act – Fact Sheet

*Protecting Constitutional Rights While Addressing Homelessness*

## WHAT WE NEED

We need **[LEGISLATOR NAME/TITLE]** to sponsor the Gloria Johnson Act for the 2027 session. This bill stops the criminalization of homelessness in Florida while saving taxpayer money and protecting constitutional rights.

## WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

- **Last summer the Supreme Court reversed decades of precedent.** The *Grants Pass* decision now lets cities arrest people for sleeping outside even when there are no shelter beds available.
- **Florida renters are one emergency away from homelessness.** More than 38% are paying over 30% of income on housing. A medical bill or car repair can push families onto the street.
- **Arrests make homelessness worse, not better.** Criminal records block people from jobs and housing. We spend money trapping people in poverty instead of helping them escape it.
- **Punishing survival is unconstitutional.** When someone has nowhere to go, arresting them for sleeping violates basic protections against cruel punishment.

## WHAT THE BILL DOES

- **No more arrests for survival.** Cities cannot fine or arrest people for sleeping, sitting, or seeking shelter in public unless adequate indoor space is actually available to them.
- **Sets real standards for shelter.** Defines what counts as adequate: free, accessible to people with disabilities, allows families and pets to stay together, no daily reapplication. Shelters that split up families or turn away people with dogs do not qualify.
- **Creates a legal defense.** Anyone charged under anti-camping laws can raise a necessity defense. Prosecutors then have to prove adequate shelter was available. Courts must tell defendants about this right.
- **Overrides local ordinances.** Provides consistent statewide protections instead of a patchwork of local laws that criminalize poverty.

## THE BOTTOM LINE: HOUSING COSTS LESS THAN HANDCUFFS

- **Each arrest costs thousands.** Police time, court processing, public defenders, jail beds. Then the person gets released back to the street with a record. Multiply by thousands of interactions per year.
- **Emergency rooms become housing.** Without shelter, people cycle through ERs and crisis services—the most expensive interventions possible.
- **Housing is cheaper and it works.** Permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing cost less than the arrest-jail-ER cycle and actually get people off the streets.
- **This bill redirects wasted enforcement dollars.** Instead of paying for a revolving door, Florida can invest in solutions with proven track records.

This is smart policy and smart budgeting. **[LEGISLATOR NAME/TITLE]** can lead Florida toward an approach that actually reduces homelessness instead of just shuffling people around at taxpayer expense.

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