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DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS IN MAINE

**Report of the Attorney General's Office
Pursuant to 2003 Public Laws, Ch. 673, Part NNN**

January 5, 2005

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January 28, 2005

Honorable Beth Edmonds
President of the Senate
Honorable John Richardson
Speaker of the House
122nd Maine Legislature
State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear President Edmonds and Speaker Richardson:

Enclosed, pursuant to the provisions of 2003 Public Laws, Chapter 673, Part NNN, is the report of the Attorney General's Office to the Legislature concerning discrimination against people who are homeless in Maine.

Thank you for your consideration of these materials. Please do not hesitate to call if you should have any questions on these issues or my recommendations.

Sincerely,

G. Steven Rowe
Attorney General

MAY 10 2005

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I. LEGISLATIVE CHARGE

The 121st Maine Legislature directed the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to study the types and extent of discrimination against homeless people in Maine.

Sec. NNN-1. Study discrimination against homeless individuals.

The Attorney General shall study the types and extent of discrimination against homeless individuals in the State. The study must include, but is not limited to, an assessment of the prevalence of acts of physical force or violence against, damage or destruction of property of or trespass on property of homeless individuals and of threats of physical force or violence against, damage or destruction of property of or trespass on property of homeless individuals. The study must also include an assessment of the prevalence of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals in housing, public accommodations and pricing of goods and services.

Sec. NNN-2. Report.

By January 5, 2005, the Attorney General shall submit to the Legislature a report summarizing the results of the study required under section 1 of this Part.

Sec. NNN-3. Legislation.

By January 5, 2005, the Attorney General shall, if the Attorney General determines it necessary based on the results of the study required under section 1 of this Part, submit legislation to the Legislature that would make illegal certain acts of discrimination against homeless individuals.

2003 Public Laws Ch. 673 §NNN.

In response to that directive, the OAG sought to gather as much information as possible on these subjects. The OAG determined that the most efficient and appropriate way to gather this information was to survey providers of shelter and other services to homeless individuals and families, survey law enforcement agencies around the State about their experiences with providing services to homeless people, conduct follow-up interviews of law enforcement agencies in Maine's largest municipalities and conduct hearings that would solicit oral and written input from homeless persons and providers of services to homeless persons. While there were other ways to gather information about the homeless population, the OAG felt that the approach it selected would result in securing data and input from different parts of the State of Maine. This multi-faceted approach yielded a great deal of information

about the experiences of Maine's homeless population, the observations of professionals who provide services to this population and the insights of law enforcement agencies. The problems discussed in this report are complex and do not lend themselves to simple solutions.

II. PROCESS

A. SURVEYS OF SHELTER AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Office of the Attorney General circulated a survey to homeless shelters and other service providers throughout Maine. (A copy of this survey is attached to this report.) Surveys were sent to 48 shelters and other service providers. Twenty-one shelters and service providers responded.

1. Bridge Program, Portland
2. CCM SMC JISS, Bangor
3. Halcyon House, Skowhegan
4. Hope Haven Gospel Mission, Lewiston
5. Ingraham House, Portland
6. MAPS, Houlton
7. Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter, Waterville
8. Milestone Foundation, Portland
9. New Beginnings, Lewiston
10. New Hope for Women, Rockland
11. Next Step Domestic Violence Project, Ellsworth
12. Oxford Street Shelter, Portland
13. Preble Street, Portland
14. Rumford Group Homes, Inc., Rumford
15. Rural Community Action Ministries, Leeds
16. Strathglass Shelter, South Paris
17. Tedford Shelter, Portland
18. Washington Hancock Community Agency, Millbridge
19. York County Shelter Programs, Inc., Alfred
20. Youth Alternatives – Reardon's Place, Portland
21. YWCA Women's Shelter, Portland

B. SURVEYS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Another survey was emailed by Brian MacMaster, Chief of the Investigation Division, to every law enforcement agency in the State of

Maine. (A copy of the survey distributed to law enforcement agencies is attached to this report.) Twelve law enforcement agencies responded to the survey.

1. Bethel Police Department
2. Brunswick Police Department
3. Dexter Police Department
4. Freeport Police Department
5. Gouldsboro Police Department
6. Oxford County Sheriff's Office
7. Orono Police Department
8. Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office
9. Somerset County Sheriff's Office
10. University of Maine at Orono Police Department
11. Waldoboro Police Department
12. Winslow Police Department

C. INTERVIEWS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff from the Investigation Division of the Office of the Attorney General contacted three of Maine's largest local law enforcement agencies to discuss issues of confronting homeless people and their interaction with law enforcement personnel. Staff contacted representatives of the Bangor Police Department, the Lewiston Police Department and the Portland Police Department. The questions posed and the answers provided were general in nature.

D. PUBLIC LISTENING CONFERENCES

After conducting the surveys of homeless shelters, providers of services to homeless people and law enforcement agencies, the Office of the Attorney General scheduled four public listening conferences in four different parts of Maine. Listening conferences were held at:

1. Preble Street Resource Center, Portland, November 22, 2004
2. Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, Bangor, December 2, 2004
3. York County Shelter Programs, Inc., Alfred, December 7, 2004
4. Jubilee Center, Lewiston, December 14, 2004

All listening conferences were preceded by public notice to newspapers and other media outlets as well as shelter providers. A less formal information gathering meeting was held at the Common

Connections Club in Biddeford on December 7, 2004, to secure input from homeless people in that part of Maine.

At the beginning of each listening conference, Attorney General Steven Rowe explained the purpose of the conference and the need to gather as much information as possible about the prevalence of acts of physical force, violence and property damage against the homeless as well as acts of discrimination in housing, public accommodations and the pricing of goods and services. Recognizing that some people might not be comfortable discussing these very personal issues in a public setting, the opportunity to discuss these issues in private with the Attorney General and his staff was made at the outset of every hearing. Whenever anyone wanted to discuss these matters privately, that request was accommodated.

In addition, all interested persons were offered the opportunity to submit comments and concerns in writing to shelter staff or directly to the Office of the Attorney General. Comments submitted to shelter staff were then transmitted to the Office of the Attorney General. Written comments were allowed to be filed until the close of business on December 14, 2004. Despite that deadline, the Office of the Attorney General accepted comments about these issues for as long as practical.

III. RESPONSES

A. RESPONSES OF SHELTER AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

Item 1 asked **“Are you aware of instances in which individuals have been the victim of violence or property damage or have been threatened with violence or property damage because they are homeless or perceived to be homeless?”** *Seventeen of the twenty-one respondents answered “no” to this question while four answered “yes”. One of the respondents that answered “no” was the Bridge Program in Portland. However, their response indicated that although there had been no incidents at the Bridge during the 10 years that the respondent has served as its director, she had heard of such incidents from her clients. These incidents all occurred when clients were living in the streets or other places. The director of the Bridge Program did not provide any details of these incidents.*

The four agencies that answered “yes” to this question provided the following comments in Item 2:

1. **Milestone Foundation.** *Occasionally our clients will give reports of being mistreated by public due to being homeless alcoholics.*
2. **Preble Street**¹. *Preble Street provided the most detailed response to this survey and its response is discussed later in this report.*
3. **Tedford Shelter.** *Chronically homeless individuals beaten up on the streets either by other homeless individuals or by teens or groups (very occasionally) in this area.*
4. **York County Shelter Programs, Inc.** *My recollection from working here 13 years is of a variety of “snippets” of stories from clients about a variety of experiences. For example “their tent disappeared”, being sworn at or spit at, told to get out or else. Broken arm, assaulted, “stoned” with rocks.*

Of the four responders that answered “yes” to the question posed in Item 1, only two, Milestone Foundation and Preble Street, indicated that the incidents of violence, threats or property damage were reported to law enforcement agencies in Item 3. Milestone Foundation, in response to Item 4, indicated that the result of reporting these incidents to law enforcement was that the Milestone Foundation provided in-service training to the law enforcement agencies to which the reports were given. Again, the most detailed responses to Items 3 & 4 were provided by Preble Street and will be discussed at this time.

In response to Items 2, 3 & 4, Preble Street provided details of 26 separate incidents involving homeless people. These responses ranged from cases in which verbal taunts were directed at homeless people up to incidents that involved serious physical violence. Although some of the cases that were described were not dated, it appeared that Preble Street reported events that occurred beginning in July, 2003, through August, 2004. Of the 26 incidents, two involved verbal taunting that was not accompanied by violence, threats of violence or property damage. Seventeen of the incidents that contained allegations of violence, threats of violence or property damage were not reported to any law enforcement agency while seven were reported to law enforcement agencies. Of the seven incidents that were reported to law

¹ Preble Street was formerly known as the Preble Street Resource Center. Preble Street includes the Resource Center and the Teen Center.

enforcement agencies, there were two incidents in which a victim was never identified even though the potential defendants were. Preble Street reported that the incidents that were referred to law enforcement agencies met with varying levels of response from those agencies. The incidents where the victims were identified and that were reported to law enforcement agencies are detailed here².

Preble Street reported that on July 30, 2003, two homeless men were attacked while sleeping in their tent under the Casco Bay Bridge. Both men reported serious injuries. This incident was reported to the South Portland Police Department and Preble Street indicated that the victims found the "investigation...limited... ."

Preble Street reported an incident in which a homeless man was assaulted and sustained injuries that required hospitalization on October 7, 2003. Prosecution in this case was not possible because the victim could not identify his assailants when the Portland Police Department arranged a photo line-up.

Preble Street reported that on October 30, 2003, a homeless man was assaulted by a group of young men. In response to his reporting this incident to the Portland Police Department, Preble Street reports that the victim was told to call the Portland Police Department if he saw his assailants again.

Preble Street reported that on December 25, 2003, a homeless man was attacked from behind by two unknown assailants. The victim suffered injuries that required hospitalization. Though the incident was reported to the Portland Police Department, the result of that reporting was described as "unknown".

In the most recent incident described by Preble Street, a homeless man was the victim of physical violence. The victim was assaulted by two young men and stabbed in the back. This incident was reported to the Portland Police Department. Preble Street reports that a detective took a statement from the victim and subsequently contacted the victim to come to the police station to "look at a line-up".

Preble Street's response to the survey indicates that the vast majority of cases in which homeless people were the victim of violence or property damage were not reported to any law enforcement agency.

² The names of all homeless persons who provided information or about whom information was provided are redacted from this report.

In some cases victims did not report because they thought they had been “trespassing” and were fearful of contacting law enforcement. In other instances, victims did not report because they “had unpaid fines” or believed their complaints would not be taken seriously. The incidents that were never referred to any law enforcement agency are detailed here.

Preble Street reported a homeless man was pelted with rocks by four young men while he was collecting cans from a dumpster in the alley at Monument Square during the middle of the day.

Preble Street reported that in August 2003, a homeless man was sleeping in back of the “Labor Ready” building on Federal Street when two young men threw a brick at him. The victim and his friends estimated that the young men were around 15 or 16 years old. The brick hit the victim in the head and cut his neck. When the victim was treated for his injury at Preble Street, he commented “just because you’re down and out, doesn’t mean you should get hit with a brick. No one deserves that.”

During the summer of 2003 through October 2003, Preble Street reported that the camp site of a male and female homeless couple was vandalized and the couple’s possessions destroyed. The couple’s tent was slashed and food was destroyed. The couple had been camping at the end of Commercial Street.

Preble Street reported that on October 17, 2003, a male and female homeless couple was approached by a group of youth in a park on Congress Street near the Fire Department. The young people shoved the woman and knocked the man out of his wheelchair.

Preble Street also reported an incident that occurred in October 2003, in which a camp near Exit 8 in Portland was burned down two times in two weeks.

Preble Street reported a series of incidents that occurred in the fall of 2003 in which two men and a woman were victimized. These three persons had been camping at Thompson Point. They reported that on multiple occasions young men would throw rocks at the back window of the trailer in which they lived. They also reported that on at least one occasion their possessions were destroyed. These individuals also reported witnessing another homeless man being struck in the chest with a piece of lumber. This victim required hospitalization.

These three individuals also reported seeing other homeless individuals assaulted, but provided no details of those assaults.

A homeless man reported to Preble Street that on October 29, 2003, he had been assaulted by a group of youth. One of the young men hit him and beat him when he fell to the ground. The group continued to assault him until a passer-by called an ambulance. The victim required hospital treatment.

The same three homeless people who described the series of incidents that occurred in the fall of 2003 that are detailed above, reported to Preble Street they had been assaulted with rocks while they were sitting in Deering Oaks during the summer of 2003. They also reported that they witnessed another homeless man being assaulted. Preble Street reported that one of the three homeless people involved in the prior incident also told them he had been assaulted while near the homeless shelters on Portland Street in the fall of 2003.

A homeless man reported to Preble Street that in the fall of 2003 he accidentally stepped on the back of a young man's shoe and was then assaulted by that young person.

A homeless man reported to Preble Street that in the fall of 2003 his campsite was repeatedly destroyed.

Preble Street reported that on November 14, 2003, a homeless man was walking alone at night when he was grabbed by two men. These two men allegedly took his jacket and ran away.

Preble Street also reported an incident in which a manager of a Rite-Aid store located on Congress Street threw a bucket of water on a homeless man. The manager apparently claimed that the homeless man was bothering his customers and he wanted him to leave. This incident was witnessed by a City of Portland Public Health Nurse who told the manager that she would call the police and report this assault if the manager continued to douse him with water. Preble Street reports that the manager was ultimately suspended from his employment for these actions.

Preble Street also reported a variety of incidents in which homeless people claimed to have been assaulted, but provided few details about the nature of the assaults. Preble Street described multiple incidents in which homeless people were the targets of verbal slurs and taunts. These people reported that they felt they were

targeted because they were homeless or appeared to be homeless. In some instances, derogatory language related to homelessness was used.

Item 5 asked **“Are you aware of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals or individuals perceived to be homeless with regard to housing, public accommodations or the pricing of goods or services?”** Fifteen of the 21 respondents answered “no” to this question. Five respondents answered “yes”. One of the respondents did not answer this question, but subsequently provided information about discrimination that the respondent had witnessed or heard about. Six agencies provided details about acts of discrimination. These include the five agencies that answered “yes” to item 5, and the one agency that did not answer item 5.

1. **The Bridge Program.** While the Bridge Program did not answer item 5, it did discuss what it described as “not overt discrimination.” The details provided in item 6 dealt with housing becoming unavailable when a landlord learns that the applicants for that housing are living in a shelter for “homeless and mentally ill clients.” Also reported were incidents in which clients have been treated “rudely” by “cab drivers, pharmacists and other community providers.”
2. **Ingraham House.** This provider spoke about difficulties in obtaining housing and long waiting lists for housing.
3. **Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter.** This agency described a situation in which it felt that a homeless Puerto Rican family was discriminated against because of ethnic background.
4. **The Next Step Domestic Violence Project.** This agency spoke about the difficulties that female victims of domestic violence have when they try to obtain housing. The project stated that “landlords are often reluctant to rent to victims of domestic violence because of the danger and threat of violence.”
5. **Preble Street.** “Many people who use the Oxford Street Shelter services complain of discrimination from the owner of Amergian Brothers store at 190 Oxford Street. These complaints include charging people who are staying at the Oxford Street Shelter a higher price for goods than others frequenting the store, and negative comments about being homeless.” Preble Street also reported an incident in which a client was refused services at a

Starbucks in the Old Port and alleged employment discrimination.

- 6. York County Shelter Programs, Inc.** *This agency described problems faced by homeless families with children when they are confronted with “ads for apartments stating ‘no children allowed’.” In addition, clients who provide the shelter’s number as a call back number frequently do not hear back from landlords.*

Item 7 asked **“Were the incidents described in item 6 reported to any state or federal agencies?”** *None of the agencies that described incidents of discrimination reported those incidents to any state or federal agency. However, one agency, The York County Shelter Programs, Inc., did report some incidents to Pine Tree Legal Assistance. In response to that report, staff members of Pine Tree visited the shelter to discuss the rights of clients with respect to discrimination and tenants’ rights.*

Item 10 was an attempt to gauge interest of agency staff and consumers in participating in listening conferences on the topics discussed in the homelessness survey and the treatment of homeless people in general. Fifteen of the 21 agencies that responded to the survey indicated they would be interested in participating in that type of forum. Five agencies indicated that they would not be interested and one agency did not respond to the question. The agencies’ estimates about the level of interest of consumer participation were lower. Four agencies indicated that their consumers would be interested in participating in that type of forum. Two agencies indicated that consumers might be interested in participating. Six agencies responded that consumers would not be interested in participating in that type of forum and eight agencies did not respond to the question.

B. RESPONSES TO SURVEYS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Item 1 asked **“Are you aware of instances in which individuals have been the victim of violence or property damage or have been threatened with violence or property damage because they are homeless or perceived to be homeless?”** *All 12 law enforcement agencies answered this question in the negative. As a result of those answers, no law enforcement agency provided any detail about incidents that had been reported to the agency. (Item 2) Similarly, no department responded to the question “What was the result of the reporting of these incidents to law enforcement?” (Item 3)*

Item 4 asked **“Are you aware of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals or individuals perceived to be homeless with regard to housing, public accommodations or the pricing of goods or services?”** Again, all 12 law enforcement agencies answered this question in the negative. Thus, no details about “acts of discrimination” were provided in response to item #5.

Item 6 asked **“Were these incidents reported to any state or federal agencies?”** Again, all responding agencies answered this question in the negative or indicated they were without knowledge to respond to that question. Similarly, no law enforcement agency provided details about any results of reporting incidents of act of discrimination to state or federal agencies. (Item 7)

Five of the twelve law enforcement agencies that responded to this survey indicated that they would be willing to participate in listening conferences on the topics discussed in the survey and the treatment of homeless people in general. (Item 8) Those agencies were:

1. Bethel Police Department
2. Brunswick Police Department
3. Somerset County Sheriff's Office
4. Waldoboro Police Department
5. Winslow Police Department

Item 9 asked **“Are there particular challenges to investigating crimes involving victims who are homeless?”** The following law enforcement agencies provided the following responses to that question:

1. **Brunswick Police Department.** *As long as they are willing to step forward there's no problem with investigating. The problem that exists is if they are transient, to locate at a later date for follow-up, Court, etc.*
2. **Dexter Police Department.** *Unknown. No incidents dealt with.*
3. **Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office.** *Because they are transients, locating and having them at court hearings is often not possible.*
4. **Somerset County Sheriff's Office.** *Victim doesn't want prosecution; victim moves away before prosecution.*
5. **Winslow Police Department.** *Yes. Locating a victim for follow-up can be very difficult to impossible.*

C. RESPONSES IN INTERVIEWS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

1. Portland Police Department

Information about the experiences of the Portland Police Department with the homeless population was provided by a detective who also serves as the department's designated Civil Rights Officer. In that capacity he is very familiar with the department's standards and practices and its dealings with the homeless. He stated that when a complaint is received by the Portland Police Department, the initial contact will typically be made by a patrol officer. When the complaint involves a homeless person, the patrol officer often encounters an uncooperative person who does not want to make a formal complaint. If a complaint is filed that needs more investigation, it is transferred to the Detective Bureau.

Complaints that reach the Detective Bureau are hampered when the investigating detective cannot find the homeless victim who made the complaint. He went on to say that the detectives try to locate the victim and that announcements are placed in the Department's bulletin telling all patrol officers to look for the victim, and if the victim is located, officers are directed to tell the victim to contact the investigating detective. He stated that cases are often closed because the homeless person cannot be located. Even if the investigating detective locates the homeless person, the case may also fail because the victim cannot be found to be subpoenaed for court appearances or does not appear in court on the scheduled date. He added that along with the difficulties already mentioned, credibility issues arise if the victim was under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if the victim suffers from a mental illness that interferes with his or her ability to accurately represent what occurred.

2. Lewiston Police Department

Information about the experiences of the Lewiston Police Department with the homeless population was provided by the Deputy Chief. The Deputy Chief is very familiar with the department's standards and practices and its dealings with the homeless. The Deputy Chief stated that unlike Portland, Lewiston does not have homeless people living in makeshift camps. He stated that Lewiston has two good shelters with respected staff. Staff from the two shelters tries to secure information about the people who reside in shelters. That information includes a contact person, such as a relative, with whom the homeless

person maintains contact. Therefore, the department is generally able to locate a homeless victim through the shelter or the shelter's staff. He stated that when a victim is transient and not staying at a shelter, he or she is more difficult to locate. He acknowledged that at times complaints have been dismissed because the homeless victim was transient, had moved on or could not be found.

The Deputy Chief could not recall any incident where a homeless person in Lewiston was targeted because the person was homeless or perceived to be homeless. He has never heard of a homeless person being assaulted in Lewiston because that person appeared to be homeless.

3. Bangor Police Department

Information about the experiences of the Bangor Police Department with the homeless population was provided by a sergeant who also serves as a shift commander. As shift commander he is very knowledgeable about the department's standards and practices and its dealings with the homeless. He stated that when the department receives a complaint from a homeless person, it is handled like every other complaint. He reported that at times patrol officers have difficulty finding homeless victims when they are to be subpoenaed for court. That results in cases being dropped. He stated that it is not uncommon to receive complaints involving homeless people having disagreements with other homeless people. Complaints of that nature typically arise in the park next to the shelter. He had no knowledge of any incidents where a homeless person was targeted because the person was homeless.

D. TESTIMONY PROVIDED AT PUBLIC LISTENING CONFERENCES

1. Preble Street Resource Center, Portland, November 22, 2004

The initial hearing was attended by Attorney General Steven Rowe, Chuck Dow, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, and Leanne Robbin, Chief of the Financial Crimes & Civil Rights Division on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General, along with Legislators-elect John Brautigam, Charlie Harlow and Herb Adams.

Anecdotal testimony was provided from a variety of sources about assaults on the homeless. One homeless man stated that he had been

the victim of an assault. He described an incident in which he had been spit upon and stated that the person who spit on him attempted to lure him into a fight. This victim did not report the assault to police because at the time of the assault he was drunk in public and was concerned that he would be arrested.

Other information about assaults on the homeless was provided by consumer advocates and staff of Preble Street. Consumer Advocate Steve Huston stated that he felt reports and stories of assaults on the homeless have increased in recent years. Mr. Huston discussed a "gang" known as the BFK (Bum Fighting Krew). Mr. Huston stated that this gang of youth was responsible for physical assaults on the homeless. Mr. Huston stated that Preble Street does presentations at high schools to curb this type of violence, publicize issues confronting the homeless and increase sensitivity to the plight of the homeless. Mr. Huston recognized that it is often difficult to convince homeless victims to report incidents and to follow through on complaints with law enforcement agencies. Nonetheless, Mr. Huston contended that the safety of the homeless population in Portland would be enhanced by adding homelessness as a category under the Maine Civil Rights Act.

Kippy Smith, a teacher at Portland High School, testified in support of amending the Maine Civil Rights Act. She discussed a website located at "bumfights.com." Ms. Smith stated that this website may incite young people to commit acts of violence against Maine's homeless population. Ms. Smith recounted some students telling her that they had seen young people assaulting homeless persons in October 2003. However, these students did not recognize the perpetrators or report the incident to any law enforcement agency.

Other persons who provided information at this listening conference spoke primarily about what they perceived as a lack of responsiveness and sensitivity on the part of law enforcement. One homeless person stated we are "more harassed by the police than by the kids." He asserted that violence against the homeless was "not that much of a problem" and that in his two years of homelessness he had "never seen kids assaulting the homeless." A homeless woman discussed problems with law enforcement. She discussed an incident in which her camp site was vandalized during 2000. She stated that when she contacted the police, the responding officer told her "you call again and you will go to jail."

Numerous individuals, including homeless persons, consumer advocates and other shelter personnel, discussed discrimination in the

pricing of goods and services. Specifically, they provided information about a shop owner across the street from the Oxford Street Shelter. They stated that this store owner sometimes refuses to serve the homeless or charges them more for goods and services than they do for individuals who are not considered homeless.

2. Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, Bangor, December 2, 2004

This hearing was attended by Attorney General Steven Rowe, Chuck Dow, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, and Thomas Harnett, Assistant Attorney for Civil Rights Education & Enforcement on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General, and Representative Michael E. Dunn.

One homeless man testified at this hearing. In addition, personnel from two agencies that provide services to the homeless provided information. Persons who provided information were questioned as well.

The homeless man who testified stated that he had been homeless for many years. His primary problems centered on discrimination. He felt homeless people experience a great deal of discrimination in employment and housing. Specifically, he discussed the difficulty in obtaining employment when one does not have a permanent address. He said that anytime he leaves an address or phone number that can be identified with a homeless shelter; he never receives return calls from prospective employers.

This individual also discussed his difficulties in dealing with law enforcement agencies. He stated that during his 13 years of being homeless, including three years in Bangor, he had very little success in getting law enforcement to take his complaints seriously. He added that in his view, "if current laws are not being enforced it makes little sense to create additional laws." He also discussed groups of young people known as "bum bashers" and "head bashers." He has seen the temporary homes and camps of homeless people in Bangor destroyed by these young people. However, he saw the larger problem being the verbal abuse that he experiences on a regular basis. He thinks that most people would prefer the homeless to be "out of sight and out of mind." He ended his discussion by saying what he really hoped for was "for people to give us half a chance."

Mike Andrick, the Program Manager for Hope Haven, discussed what he viewed as a rise in violence directed at homeless people who

live outside. Mr. Andrick stated that during the summer months there are probably 40-50 people who live outside in Bangor. That number drops to about 10 during the winter. Mr. Andrick stated that this problem was "not on the same level as in Portland," but that he had heard about groups of young people tearing up and burning down temporary housing created by homeless people. Mr. Andrick had also heard of homeless people being assaulted. Mr. Andrick stated that Hope Haven has very good relationship with the Bangor Police Department but that that relationship does not help when cases are not reported. Mr. Andrick said that homeless people do not report incidents in which they are the victim of violence to local law enforcement. Mr. Andrick does not know why these reports are not filed. He assumed that some victims are afraid of retaliation from their assailants if they report incidents to local law enforcement.

Pat Kimball of Wellspring, Inc. provided information about her experience with homeless clients. She is aware of cases in which homeless women were the victim of sexual assaults but did not report those cases to law enforcement. She felt that crimes are not reported because "testifying is scary" and many homeless persons are afraid of law enforcement. She added that many homeless individuals are "anxious in group settings and with authority due to mental illness."

3. York County Shelter Program, Inc., Alfred, December 7, 2004

This conference was attended by Attorney General Steven Rowe, Chuck Dow, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, and Thomas Harnett, Assistant Attorney for Civil Rights Education & Enforcement on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General.

Information was provided by a number of homeless persons at this listening conference. A homeless man described how he became homeless and his experiences of being homeless. He stated that he had a "normal life in central Maine" until his life took a turn in 2002. Upon becoming homeless, his life changed completely. For the first time he could remember, he was "shunned" by stores, "asked to leave public libraries" and treated rudely by law enforcement. He described an incident in which he was asked to leave a bus stop by a police officer. He acknowledged he was slow in responding because he was cold and had to gather all of his belongings. The officer became upset and told him his "ass would be kicked" and that if he "got a fucking job he would not be so fucking cold." This incident left him "bewildered" and made him unlikely to ever report an incident if he were victimized by others.

He said that the hardest part about being homeless is that you are constantly "treated as a second or third class citizen."

Another homeless man stated he had never really experienced discrimination or violence, but that there were many obstacles to escaping homelessness nonetheless. He discussed the difficulty in obtaining general assistance when one resides in a shelter that is located in a community that one has not resided in previously. He stated that obtaining general assistance from some communities is "like pulling eye teeth." He discussed the difficulties of attempting to find employment or permanent housing when one resides in a homeless shelter. He stated once one provides the phone number and address of a shelter, it is "the kiss of death" and one is continually "overlooked" due to the connection to a shelter.

A homeless man told the story of a young homeless woman. He stated that it is very difficult for homeless people to obtain housing through Section 8. This young woman was unable to obtain an apartment that she wanted because there were some minor defects in the apartment and the Maine State Housing Authority would not approve it upon inspection. He stated that the problems could have easily been rectified. Instead, the young woman lost her opportunity to obtain more permanent housing.

The topic of general assistance was also discussed by David Beseda, a staff person at the shelter. Mr. Beseda described an incident in which he assisted two homeless women in their attempt to apply for general assistance benefits in Sanford. The two women were looking for housing and work in Sanford at the time they attempted to apply. Mr. Beseda had been trained by Pine Tree Legal Assistance on the rules and regulations governing the general assistance program and believed that the two women were eligible to file applications in Sanford because they were looking for housing and work there and had no other residence. However, when Mr. Beseda accompanied these two women to the City of Sanford Municipal Office, they were told "we will not take [your] applications." Mr. Beseda tried to explain that eligibility could only be determined after applications were filed, but was not successful. City personnel then told Mr. Beseda that they had called the police to have them ejected from the building and possibly arrested. Mr. Beseda said that this incident had a very negative impact on the two women who were seeking benefits and that they chose not to challenge or otherwise appeal Sanford's actions. He stated that if people are unable to obtain general assistance when they need it, they are unlikely to secure permanent housing and more likely to become chronically homeless.

4. Jubilee Center, Lewiston, December 14, 2004

This conference was attended by Attorney General Steven Rowe, Chuck Dow, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, and Thomas Harnett, Assistant Attorney for Civil Rights Education & Enforcement on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General. Representative Elaine Makas and Representative Margaret M. Craven also attended.

This event was well attended and information was provided by numerous homeless persons and staff of shelter and service providers. A homeless man said that the biggest problem facing the homeless is that one is constantly "treated like crap." He stated that he had never been the victim of violence, but that he witnessed other homeless individuals being assaulted when he lived in Portland during the summer of 2004. He described an incident in which young people carrying a chain and baseball bats assaulted homeless persons living under the Casco Bay Bridge. This incident was not reported to any law enforcement agency.

He stated that homeless people are "less likely" to contact the police because they feel the "police do not care" and they look at you as if "you are no big deal." He also said that in addition to the violence he has seen, he has been the victim of verbal abuse by young people and that on at least one occasion he has had personal property stolen. He did not know if the theft was due to bias against him because he is homeless. He also said that some shop owners in Portland increase the price of beer when homeless persons are customers.

Another homeless man said that he has never been the victim of violence or property damage and he has never seen any other homeless people victimized in those ways. He said that his major problem was with the police. He said that he is constantly followed around by law enforcement officers and those officers sometimes direct verbal slurs at him. He stated that he has never faced discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

Another man who describes himself as "an ex-homeless person" provided information about why he thinks people become homeless. He said that in Lewiston many areas of the city are being renovated to attract people with higher incomes. When that happens, persons living in less expensive homes often find themselves "out in the street" because they are unable to afford the higher rents. He expressed particular concern about a proposed highway development that could

result in 850 low-income people losing their homes. He thinks communities need to do more to insure that persons with lower incomes can still afford permanent and stable housing. These concerns were echoed by a homeless woman who asked why the city does not use vacant buildings to house people that do not otherwise have homes.

A young man who identified himself “an ex-homeless person,” talked about the plight of homeless youth. He said that he was forced out of his home when his parents got divorced and told him to leave when he was seventeen. He said that it is very difficult for young people between the ages of 16 and 22 to locate transitional housing. He also said that many homeless youth have been forced out of their homes by parents who cannot accept their sexual orientation. While he has not been the victim of violence or discrimination, he did say that the verbal taunting “wears you down.”

Two other homeless persons, a man and a woman, provided information about the lack of affordable housing in the Lewiston area. Both of these persons had never been homeless until they were forced out of their homes due to spiraling rents. In particular, the woman expressed concern that she and her daughter would become chronically homeless because there were fewer and fewer affordable places where they could live. The male stated that his experience in being homeless has made him want to “give up.”

Information was also provided by shelter staff. Craig, who works at St. Martins, discussed the problems experienced by homeless persons who suffer from mental illness. He stated that many of these individuals go off their medications because they are “shuffled along” by a variety of health care providers. When these persons do not maintain their medication schedule, they often find themselves in a great deal of trouble. He said that this problem is exacerbated by the extremely long waiting lists at Tri-County Mental Health and other healthcare providers.

Craig also discussed the difficulty of homeless people finding employment when they have to leave a shelter address or phone number with a prospective employer. Craig has also heard homeless people tell him about instances when they were the victims of violence. On at least one occasion he witnessed a homeless person in Portland being robbed while he was on Preble Street. The victim thought he was robbed because he was homeless. He has also heard from homeless women that they are asked for sexual favors from potential landlords or are victims of sexual abuse. He said these cases are typically not

reported because the homeless population feels that “the police do not care.” Craig added, however, that his shelter’s relationship with the Lewiston Police Department is “very good.”

Pastor Paul McLaughlin, Executive Director of the Hope Haven Gospel Mission, provided information about his experience in working with the homeless population. He stated that the largest problem in Lewiston is there is no place for homeless persons who are ex-sex offenders or ex-felons. He described his shelter as “Christian-based” and as one that is available to families as long as the parents are “legally married.” He described his relationship with the Lewiston Police Department as good and said that law enforcement is generally “very helpful.” He also discussed the issue of mental health, stating that in his experience one in three homeless persons suffers from some form of mental illness and one in five homeless persons is “dual diagnosed,” meaning that the person suffers from a mental illness and a substance abuse problem.

IV. OTHER REPORTS AND MEETINGS

Preble Street Resource Center submitted written reports from shelter staff and homeless persons regarding the issues covered in this report. Those submissions included two reports of violence described by homeless people. In one submission, a homeless man reported that he was assaulted during an evening in mid-October, 2004. He reported that he was walking through a parking lot when two men began walking toward him. One of the men made a fist and “swung at him.” When the homeless man swung his cane in self-defense, one of the assailants took out a knife and slashed the victim’s arm. The victim did not report this to any law enforcement agency because he “didn’t feel they [the police] would do anything.” He also described an incident from over three years ago in which he was assaulted while he was playing cards with other homeless persons. He suffered serious injuries to his head and required hospitalization at that time.

Another homeless man described an incident that occurred during the evening of December 18, 2003. He reported he had been drinking and was drunk and passed out on a chair in the Oxford Street Shelter. The Shelter staff called the police. He claimed that when the police arrived he was told that he was “assaulting a police officer.” He reported that the arresting officers assaulted him while bringing him to the county jail. He claimed that the police officers used him “as a headfirst battering ram” when they were leaving the shelter.

In another report, a staff member of Preble Street reported that she had been told by another person that he had witnessed three young males taunting and harassing a homeless man in Deering Oaks. The young men had taken the victim's winter jacket and passed it back and forth. Eventually, the homeless man walked away without his jacket. There is no indication whether or not this was reported to any law enforcement agency.

Preble Street also filed a report in which a homeless male described what he believed to be discrimination in the provision of services. Specifically, he claimed that a security guard at the Public Market told him that "certain people should not be hanging around in the Public Market." This person also said that he had seen the security guard tell homeless people to leave the Public Market when they were collecting bottles or if they had been there for more than 15 or 20 minutes. He reported that these time limits were not enforced against people who did not appear to be homeless.

Representatives of the Office of the Attorney General also met with staff members from the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence (CPHV). The CPHV has also been collecting data on the experiences of homeless people in Maine. This meeting provided the opportunity to share and compare information gleaned by the Office of the Attorney General and the CPHV.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the prevalence of acts of physical force and violence, property damage and threats directed at persons believed to be homeless. As a secondary matter, the study also looked at acts of discrimination against the homeless in housing, public accommodations and the pricing of goods and services. While information about violence, property damage, threats and discrimination was presented to the Office of the Attorney General, these were clearly not the only and in some instance the most pressing problems facing homeless people in Maine.

People who are homeless wanted to discuss a host of other issues including the causes of homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, the lack of opportunity for gainful employment and the lack of access to mental health services, particularly to services that address substance abuse. It is critical to recognize and discuss these issues that were

raised by Maine's homeless population. Accordingly, after explaining our findings and recommendations regarding the report's primary focus on the prevalence of acts of physical force and violence, property damage and threats against people who are homeless, this report will conclude with a short discussion of the larger, more global issues raised by the people who participated in this process.

A. FINDINGS

1. **People who are homeless are frequently victims of crime.** There is little doubt that some of Maine's homeless citizens are the victims of violent and illegal behavior. What is less clear in many cases is whether these illegal behaviors are motivated by bias against homeless people because they are homeless or are the result of homeless people being victimized because they are so vulnerable on so many levels.
2. **People who are homeless are unlikely to report crimes against them.** Throughout this study the Office of the Attorney General heard that most acts of violence, property damage and threatening behaviors directed at the homeless are never reported to any law enforcement agency. This information was consistently provided by homeless persons, staff at shelters, persons who provide mental health services to homeless clients and other service providers.
3. **People who are homeless do not believe that law enforcement agencies take their complaints seriously.** Many homeless people also reported that they do not believe law enforcement agencies investigate their cases as fully as they do when a victim is not homeless. Other homeless victims do not report violent conduct because they fear law enforcement because they have been arrested in the past, have substance abuse problems that sometimes lead to arrest or have outstanding warrants or unpaid fines.
4. **Cases involving people who are homeless pose unique challenges to law enforcement.** Law enforcement agencies reported that even when homeless people report illegal conduct, investigation of those cases is difficult when the victim is transient or otherwise loses contact with the investigating agency. This results in cases being dismissed before they can

ever be considered by a prosecuting attorney or a court. This type of dismissal most likely adds to the lack of confidence homeless people have in the judicial process.

5. **People who are homeless face a variety of difficulties, which often cause them to lose hope.** It is beyond understatement to say that the life of a homeless person in Maine is difficult on many levels. Maine's homeless often have no regular shelter, great difficulty finding employment and permanent housing, sporadic access to healthcare, uncertain futures for themselves and their families and few prospects for a better life. Maine's homeless are also extremely vulnerable because they spend most of their time outside dealing with the elements and a larger society that at best tolerates them and at times treats them with disdain. While there are many people who exhibit kindness and compassion to the homeless, there are sadly some who treat them with contempt and others who confront them with violent behavior or otherwise take advantage of them because of their vulnerability. For some of Maine's homeless citizens, these problems are exacerbated by substance abuse and the mental and physical disabilities and illnesses with which many of Maine's homeless grapple daily.
6. **Non-reporting is key barrier.** Regardless of the reasons that violent and illegal acts occur, illegal conduct needs to be addressed, and the homeless victims of the illegal behavior of others must feel that the legal system takes these matters seriously and have confidence that the investigation and prosecution of these illegal behaviors will be pursued in the same manner whether the victim is a homeless person or not. However, matters that are not reported to law enforcement can never be investigated and will never result in prosecution. Unless the obstacles or concerns that lead to the non-reporting of illegal conduct against the homeless are identified and addressed, the pattern of non-reporting and non-prosecution might never change.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Law enforcement:

1. **Improve initial law enforcement training.** The Maine Criminal Justice Academy should add to its basic and advanced law enforcement officer training curricula focusing on homelessness, its causes and the vulnerability and unique challenges facing people who are homeless. The training should include best practices for investigation where victims and/or witnesses are homeless. It should recognize the fact that many people who are homeless also suffer from mental illness or struggle with substance abuse. The training should cover strategies for establishing and maintaining positive relationships with agencies that render services to the homeless, advocates for the homeless, and people who are homeless.
2. **Improve ongoing law enforcement training.** Law enforcement agencies should integrate training covering the above-mentioned subjects into ongoing training programs offered to officers.
3. **Appoint liaison officers.** Law enforcement agencies in communities with significant homeless populations or that have homeless shelters within their areas of jurisdiction must also take concrete and meaningful steps to improve relations with the homeless and their advocates. These agencies should designate at least one officer to serve as a liaison between the law enforcement agency and the homeless community that they serve.

Service agencies and advocates that work with the homeless:

4. **Encourage reporting of crimes against the homeless.** In order for the government to do anything about crimes against homeless people, those crimes must be reported. Service agencies and advocates that work with the homeless should work with law enforcement agencies to encourage and assist people who are homeless to promptly report crimes and to maintain contact with those agencies as the incidents are investigated and prosecuted.
5. **Meet regularly with law enforcement agency liaison officers.** Advocates, representatives of the homeless community and people who are homeless should also meet regularly with law enforcement agency liaison officers to discuss issues of concern to the homeless community, the status of pending cases where

appropriate and issues raised by the law enforcement agency.

Federal and State policymakers:

It is impossible to undertake a project like this without being deeply impressed by the courage, commitment, and knowledge of the Maine people who work daily with those who are homeless. A report like this must honor their work, and refer with deference to their recommendations for State and federal policymakers.

Two recent documents contain substantial information about the causes of, and steps to prevent, homelessness in Maine. The first, a March 2002 report entitled "Ending Homelessness: Maine's Strategic Plan," documents the extent and nature of the state's homeless problem, surveys efforts to combat homelessness, and provides a framework for attacking homelessness with specific strategies. The second, a January 2005 report entitled "State of Maine Action Plan to End Homelessness: A Ten Year Plan," identifies 11 critical issues confronting the homeless population in Maine and calls for the development of an action plan to address each of the 11 issues.

Throughout this process, staff from the Office of the Attorney General heard many of the issues discussed in these two reports identified time and time again by people who are homeless and people who provide services to Maine's homeless citizens. The issues identified by people who are homeless in many instances mirrored those identified by State and federal policymakers. As a result and in order to give voice to the concerns of people who are homeless in Maine, the Office of the Attorney General embraces the recommendations put forth in the March, 2002 and January, 2005 reports. Both reports identify actions that will substantially help prevent homelessness in Maine. The reports recommended, among other things, the following steps:

1. **Increase the availability of and access to affordable housing** for homeless individuals and families, including supportive housing.
2. **Improve access to and expand services** to include mental health and substance abuse treatment and case management services for homeless individuals and families.
3. **Improve coordination, planning and measurement of progress** by creating Regional Homeless Councils to identify existing barriers to services and localized gaps in services. These councils will also work with State and federal veterans, labor and housing agencies and providers of mental health services to establish a long term comprehensive and coordinated model of care rather than a short term program of response to crisis care.
4. **Improve and expand access to federal resources** by identifying and maximizing use of existing federal sources of funding to create housing for homeless persons including Housing and Urban Development Section 811 development opportunities and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.
5. **Enhance homeless prevention efforts** to include employment training and counseling, mental health and substance abuse services to inmates, and expanded case management services for inmates released from correctional facilities.

VI. PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Resolve, To Reduce Barriers to Reporting Crimes Against People Who Are Homeless.

Preamble. Whereas, the 121st Maine Legislature directed the Attorney General to study the nature and types of discrimination against people who are homeless in Maine; and

Whereas, the Attorney General has found, as a result of that study, that people who are homeless are frequently the victims of crimes, that they are unlikely to report those crimes, and that they believe that their reports will not be taken seriously by law enforcement; and

Whereas, the Attorney General has found that when cases involving victims and witnesses who are homeless are reported to law enforcement, those cases pose unique challenges to law enforcement; and

Whereas, the Attorney General has found that non-reporting of crimes is a key barrier to protecting people who are homeless and punishing people who commit crimes against them; and

Whereas, the Attorney General has recommended several steps that will help law enforcement agencies and advocates and service agencies that work with people who are homeless to reduce the non-reporting problem; and

Whereas, the Legislature strongly supports the goals of protecting people who are homeless and punishing those who commit crimes against them; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Criminal Justice Academy Basic Training. Resolved: That, within 90 days of the effective date of this Act, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy integrate into the present block of instruction in the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program related to dealing with vulnerable persons additional training aimed specifically at reducing barriers to reporting crimes against people who are homeless and dealing with the unique challenges posed by cases that involve victims or witnesses who are homeless, and that this training be thereafter maintained in the schedule of instruction in the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program; and be it further

Sec. 2. Required Inservice Law Enforcement Training. Resolved: That the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy include in its next schedule of required inservice training for all law enforcement officers a segment aimed specifically at reducing barriers to reporting crimes against people who are homeless and dealing with the unique challenges posed by cases that involve victims or witnesses who are homeless.

SUMMARY

This resolve requires that training aimed specifically at reducing barriers to reporting crimes against people who are homeless and dealing with the unique challenges posed by cases that involved victims or witnesses who are homeless be provided to law enforcement officers.

Attachments

Attachment A: Explanation to survey recipients on purpose of surveys. STUDY ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

The Maine State Legislature has directed the Office of the Attorney General to study the types and extent of discrimination against homeless individuals in Maine. Specifically, the Legislature has directed this office to conduct

an assessment of the prevalence of acts of physical force or violence against, damage or destruction of property of or trespass on property of homeless individuals and of threats of physical force or violence against, damage or destruction of property of or trespass on property of homeless individuals.

We have also been directed to assess the prevalence of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals in housing, public accommodations and the pricing of goods and services.

In order to do this properly, we are asking for your help. We hope that you can assist us in studying these important issues in a comprehensive and statewide manner. Initially, we are asking you to complete the attached form and return it to our office. The form asks questions about your knowledge of incidents of discrimination, copies of any data that you have compiled that relate to discrimination, and a list of other persons and agencies that we should contact. After we compile these surveys, we plan to host meetings and public hearings in an effort to complete our collection of relevant information. We have also contacted agencies that provide emergency, temporary, and long-term shelter to homeless individuals. We are hopeful that personnel from those providers, as well as consumers of their services, will participate in future meetings and public hearings.

This study will need input from you to be successful. We hope that you are able to take the time to complete the attached form and return it to:

Debi Gray
Office of the Attorney General
6 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0006

or by fax to Debi Gray at (207) 287-3120

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions about this communication or the enclosed form, please feel free to contact Assistant Attorney General Thom Harnett at 626-8800, or email Thomas.Harnett@maine.gov.

Attachment B: Survey of shelter and other service providers.
HOMELESSNESS SURVEY

NAME OF AGENCY: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____
FAX NUMBER: _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
NAME OF PERSON _____
COMPLETING SURVEY: _____

- 1) Are you aware of instances in which individuals have been the victim of violence or property damage or have been threatened with violence or property damage because they are homeless or perceived to be homeless?

Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, go to Items 2 and 3; if no, go to Item 5)

- 2) Please provide as much detail as possible about these incidents. (Attach additional pages if necessary)

- 3) Were the incidents described in Item 2 reported to any law enforcement agency? Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, go to Item 4; if no, go to Item 5)

- 4) What was the result of reporting these incidents to law enforcement?

- 5) Are you aware of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals or individuals perceived to be homeless with regard to housing, public accommodations or the pricing of goods or services?

Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, go to Items 6 and 7; if no, go to Item 9)

- 6) Please provide as much detail as possible about these acts of discrimination. (Attach additional pages if necessary)

7) Were the incidents described in Item 6 reported to any state or federal agencies? Yes___ No___ (If yes, go to Item 8; if no, go to Item 9)

8) What was the result of reporting these incidents to state or federal agencies?

9) Do you have any data or reports regarding the types of behaviors described in Item 2 or Item 6? Yes___ No___ (If yes, please provide copies of that data or those reports; if no, please go to Item 10)

10) Would you or any of the consumers of your services be willing to participate in public hearings or discussions on the topics discussed in this survey and the treatment of homeless individuals in general?

a) Agency personnel Yes___ No___

b) Consumers Yes___ No___

11) Please provide the names and contact information of any other individuals or agencies that you think should be contacted about this survey.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY MAIL TO:

DEBI GRAY
HOMELESSNESS STUDY
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
6 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0006

OR BY FAX TO:
(207) 287-3120

THANK YOU

Attachment C: Survey of law enforcement agencies.
HOMELESSNESS SURVEY
(Law Enforcement)

NAME OF AGENCY: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____
FAX NUMBER: _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
NAME OF PERSON
COMPLETING SURVEY: _____

12) Are you aware of instances in which individuals have been the victim of violence or property damage or have been threatened with violence or property damage because they are homeless or perceived to be homeless?

Yes____ No____

13) Please provide as much detail as possible about these incidents. (Attach additional pages if necessary)

14) What was the result of the reporting of these incidents to law enforcement?

15) Are you aware of acts of discrimination against homeless individuals or individuals perceived to be homeless with regard to housing, public accommodations or the pricing of goods or services?

Yes____ No____

16) Please provide as much detail as possible about these acts of discrimination. (Attach additional pages if necessary)

17) Were these incidents reported to any state or federal agencies?

Yes____ No____

18) What was the result of reporting these incidents to state or federal agencies?

19) Would you be willing to participate in public hearings or discussions on the topics discussed in this survey and the treatment of homeless individuals in general?

Yes____ No____

20) Are there particular challenges to investigating crimes involving victims who are homeless?

21) Please provide the names and contact information of any other individuals or agencies that you think should be contacted about this survey.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY MAIL TO:

DEBI GRAY
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
6 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0006

OR BY FAX TO DEBI GRAY AT (207) 287-3120

THANK YOU