



May 13, 2014

Sacramento County supervisors: Will arrest for food

Sacramento County supervisors unanimously approved **a panhandling crackdown** on Tuesday over objections from homeless advocates that they were criminalizing the poor and trampling free speech.

The new policy outlaws panhandling near banks or ATMs, gas stations, shopping centers, public transit, vehicles and traffic medians, and allows law enforcement to cite or arrest panhandlers without first obtaining a victim or witness statement.

Five other cities in the county have **similar ordinances in place**. Bob Erlenbusch of the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness called the trend a “race to the bottom.”

Supervisors pulled the measure from their consent calendar upon request from Erlenbusch and Sacramento Area Congregations Together, both of which work closely with homeless people and recommended outreach teams made up of sheriff’s deputies and social-service navigators as an alternative.

Supervisors Don Nottoli and Phil Serna directed staff to organize stakeholder meetings to discuss that possibility.

Two county residents also wrote letters objecting to the ordinance.