



Addressing the issue of homelessness in our community--and our country--in a meaningful way is a critical undertaking and speaks to the soul of our nation. The upsetting events that happened in Seminary Square Park on Wednesday night are not an isolated example of the struggles that persons experiencing homelessness and living at risk deal with on a daily basis.

When we consider the issue of homelessness, we must act with compassion and the acknowledgment that persons experiencing homelessness are no different than any of us. As the eviction moratorium ends in a few weeks, recent surveys have shown that 17-18 million Americans could face eviction, and rates of homelessness are expected to rise significantly. Regardless of each of our individual financial circumstances, a situation in which we have neighbors sleeping outside--especially in the winter and during a pandemic--is a crisis for each of us.

On the Monroe County Democratic Party leadership team alone, we have several members or their immediate family members who have experienced or nearly experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. When we gathered (on Zoom) to discuss this statement, we realized that addressing homelessness in Monroe County is something that we are all passionate about and committed to. We also recognize that a statement without action is useless, and this statement is not the end but the beginning of our commitment to our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Removing people without homes and their belongings from the encampment in the park is not an acceptable answer as we fight the war on poverty in our community. Therefore, the executive committee of the Monroe County Democratic Party calls on ALL elected representatives in both city and county government to work together in conjunction with local social service organizations, activists, and those that are experiencing homelessness to build a coalition and work together on a long-term solution. Solutions such as allocating funds for long-term housing for those unhoused, placing portable restrooms in the park, and hand washing stations are the bare minimum. We need to have a long-term solution to breaking the cycle of homelessness and to not shame or blame those who choose to remain outdoors. Our responsibility to serve our neighbors in Monroe County extends beyond any election season, and this should be demonstrated in our actions and policies. This past week, various community members have stepped up to stand in solidarity with those unhoused in our community, and we are proud to do the same. Fighting the war on poverty and not the war on the poor should be the mission for all of us. This is a vital moment in which we have an opportunity and an obligation to demonstrate our compassion and our belief in the dignity of every person, through both speech and service.

If you have the resources and the passion to help be part of the solution, here are just a few of the many wonderful organizations we recommend volunteering with or giving to:

- [Beacon](#)
- [Middle Way House](#)
- [The Bloomington Volunteer Network](#)
- [Community Kitchen of Monroe County](#)