



LEGAL SERVICES TO END HOMELESSNESS

To our community,

I apologize for my comments in The Inquirer regarding the encampment on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, which do not at all reflect the values of HAP as an organization. I regret the clumsy ways in which I tried to express my concerns for the health and welfare of the homeless individuals within the encampment. In my efforts to prioritize their wellbeing, I trivialized the objectives of the organizers as well as their support for the Black Lives Matter Movement and bringing awareness to our city's homelessness issue. I fully support the Black Lives Matter movement and for thirty years, the Homeless Advocacy Project has dedicated itself to providing legal services to people experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Philadelphia and has advocated to amend the laws and conditions that create poverty and homelessness. HAP respects and supports the rights of homeless individuals to advocate for themselves and make their own decisions about how, when and where to do so.

Most of all, I am sorry that this has become a distraction to the story when attention, time and resources should be focused on serving our vulnerable populations. I hope that we and the collective service organizations around our city can move forward and work together to serve the homeless communities of Philadelphia. HAP is committed to continuing our work and, above all, listening to the voices of those who are rarely heard in this city.

Sincerely,

Marsha I. Cohen, Esquire  
Executive Director  
Homeless Advocacy Project