

# The Five Filters

## REALITY TESTING

Double-check your assumptions about the unhomed against current facts, myths, and studies. When it comes to understanding others different from us, we owe it to them to be researched, accurate, and open to change. Otherwise we could very easily make harmful decisions.

1



## GROUP IMMERSION

If we were voting about miners in Kentucky, we'd visit their families and underground caves. We should do no less here. Tour a shelter or sanctioned encampment and break bread together. Talk over coffee. Lived experience is a powerful element towards understanding others.

2



## HERO READING

Someone once said that you can't be fair to another till you see their beauty. No one is a single story. Nothing clears the eyes better than reading about a group's champions. The unhoused founded America (Ben Franklin), and wrote our famous anthem, "God Bless America" (Irving Berlin).

3



## FAIRNESS ANALYSIS

Before drawing conclusions, "Am I being as fair and just as possible?" Am I feeding into harmful stereotypes? A good place to start is philosopher John Rawls', "veil of ignorance" test. Whenever effecting the human rights of another, we are on sacred ground. Have you done your very best?

4



"There is no short-cut to fairness"

# POLITICAL COURAGE

Whatever your decisions, are you willing to stand alone and be independent? Without fear or favor of others? History shows crowds are not always correct, and sometimes you have to sacrifice yourself for a greater principle. We serve a high office.

5



## +1 LAW ABIDING

This one's usually handled by staff attorneys.

The Constitution applies to every citizen — regardless of color, creed, or cot. Decisions must conform to the different homeless laws, such as *Martin v. Boise*; *Seattle v. Long*; *Lakewood v. Willis*; and commonly the 1st, 4th, 8th, and 14th U.S. Amendments.

Lawsuits can be costly when this area is not treated with diligence and circumspect.

## ABOUT CARD

Every day, politicians across our States need to make choices regarding the unhomed. An area for which very few have any personal experience — and regarding a group in which the media frequently highlight only their worse aspects. This seldom creates an environment for balanced decision-making.

Filters give people a way to ensure that their reasoning is in line with impartiality and fairness for all. They also prevent us from accidentally making the same skewed or prejudicial choices many of our colleagues made during other historical eras.

This card does not provide specific solutions — those vary with the complexities of each region — but rather provides a framework for critical-thinking. Please take a moment and consider each of these filters. When applied, the right answers, and the chances of our making ethical choices rise exponentially. As does citizen respect for us.

*Tod Gunther*

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*\* Housing status is referred to by different terms. There is none that every agency or individual resonates with.*

“With great power comes great responsibility”