

# The Criminalization of Poverty in the United States

United States UPR Pre-Session  
28 August 2025  
Geneva



if  
when  
how

# Recommendations

## **1. Abolish the criminalization of poverty and repeal laws and policies that punish marginalized communities and their support systems.**

- Abolish laws and ordinances criminalizing unhoused and housing insecure individuals, and civil involuntary commitment.
- Abolish laws criminalizing people based on pregnancy status and its outcomes.
- Repeal mandatory reporting laws targeting pregnant people; safeguard privacy of reproductive health data.
- Abolish laws criminalizing sex work.
- Amend self-defense laws to reflect the realities of intimate partner violence and trauma to protect survivors from criminalization.
- Ensure mutual aid providers are not targeted for assisting unhoused persons with services.
- Abolish the criminalization of reproductive healthcare, midwifery and cultural birth practices care, and gender affirming care.

## **2. Divest from carceral systems and invest in universal healthcare consistent with medical and human rights standards.**

- Guarantee universal, affordable access to evidence-based care, including abortion, contraception, pre- and post-natal healthcare, gender affirming care, and voluntary, nonjudgmental, and trauma-informed substance use treatment.
- Provide rights-respecting federal guidance on gender-affirming care and ensure states lift discriminatory barriers.
- Comply with UPR recommendations and obligations under ICCPR, CAT, and CERD.

## **3. Guarantee adequate, affordable, and culturally appropriate housing for all.**

- Increase HUD funding and enforce protections against discrimination in housing and shelters.
- Fund universal legal counsel for eviction cases; hold landlords who neglect maintaining safe and habitable living conditions accountable.
- Recognize and implement the human right to adequate housing that is accessible, affordable, habitable, well-located, and culturally adequate.