

LAW & JUSTICE

Right 2 Dream Too Fined \$12,592

Activists say it's about human rights, not money

The City of Portland sent a \$12,592 bill last week to Right 2 Dream Too, the organization that provides sleeping space for people without housing at Northwest Fourth Avenue and Burnside Street.

The invoice accounts for violations of city codes related to recreational camping.

Right 2 Dream Too leaders say this is the first time they have received a bill from the city. Previous notices have been sent to the private landowners who donated the space for use as a refuge for the homeless, Michael Wright and Dan Cossette.

Activists at the site continue to maintain that the conflict with the city is a human rights issue, not a zoning code dispute.

"We are not a recreational campground. We have provided urgently needed shelter for 60 to 90 people every night since we opened in October 2011," says Ibrahim Mubarak, who helped

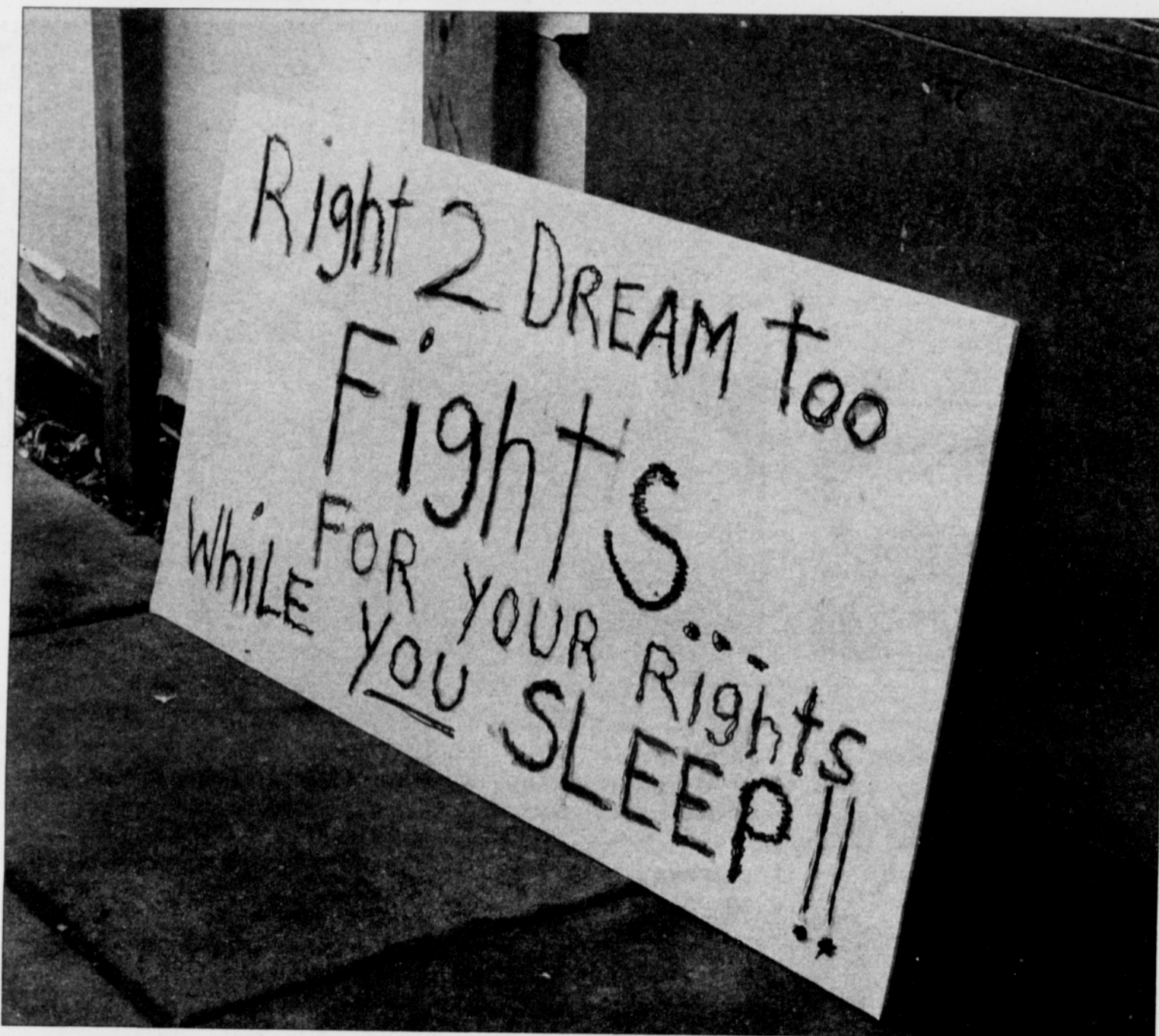


PHOTO BY CARI HACHMANN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
A sign advocates for the rights of people without housing at the Right 2 Dream Too encampment, located on a vacant gravel lot at Northwest Fourth Avenue and Burnside Street.

start Right 2 Dream Too.

"The fines should be waived and the city should work with us not against us. In the meantime, with temperatures dipping below freezing at night, R2DToo will continue to provide essential housing services at no cost to the taxpayer," Mubarak said.

In the past six weeks, there has been renewed attention focused on the site, a gravel lot filled with tents. The Grove Hotel across the street is slated for conversion to a youth hostel with the help of millions of dollars of public money.

Late last year, Grove Hotel owner and developer, David Gold, initiated a public campaign aimed at gathering complaints against Right 2 Dream Too.

In early December, Portland Business Alliance published a letter to City Commissioner Saltzman that called on him to increase pressure on the Right 2 Dream Too advocates. On Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, the activists and landowners filed suit against the city.

On Saturday, supporters in the 20th annual Sisters of the Road Martin Luther King Day March included a stop at Right 2 Dream Too.

School Shooting Spurs Action on Guns

Obama issues orders and proposes new laws

(AP) - Braced for a fight, President Barack Obama last week unveiled the most sweeping proposals for curbing gun violence in two decades, pressing a reluctant Congress to pass universal background checks and bans on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines like the ones used in the Newtown, Conn., school shooting.

A month after that horrific massacre, Obama also used his presidential powers to enact 23 measures that don't require the backing of lawmakers. The president's executive actions include ordering federal agencies to make more data available for background checks, appointing a director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and directing the Centers for Disease Control to research gun violence.



Hinna Zeejah, 8 (from left), Taejah Goode, 10, Julia Stokes, 11, and Grant Fritz, 8, children who wrote letters to President Barack Obama about the school shooting in Newtown, Conn., watch as President Obama signs executive orders last week at the White House outlining proposals to reduce gun violence. (AP photo)

But the president, speaking at White House ceremony, focused his attention on the divided Congress, saying only lawmakers could enact the most effective measures for preventing more mass shootings.

"To make a real and lasting difference, Congress must act," Obama said. "And Congress must act soon."

The president vowed to use "whatever weight this office holds" to press lawmakers into action on his \$500 million plan. He is also calling for improvements in school safety, including putting 1,000 police officers in schools and bolstering mental health care by training more health professionals to deal with young people who may be at risk.

Acknowledging the tough fight ahead, Obama said there will be pundits, politicians and special interest groups that will seek to "gin up fear" that the White House wants to take away the right to own a gun.

"Behind the scenes, they'll do

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