

February 19, 2020

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Senate Committee

Our names are Jason and Vanessa Houk and we are organizers with Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice. We were contacted by Lisa and James Yancy on Feb 6th, 2020. James and Lisa are from Arizona, had recently moved to Southern Oregon to get assistance from the VA and other resources to help get back on their feet. James is a Gulf War veteran and had just gotten out of the hospital from the flu.

We explained that Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice has a budget for helping folks such as seniors and people that are ill to have a warm hotel room to stay in on winter nights. After talking and hearing about the Yancy's situation, the organization decided that finding a bed for the vet to recuperate in was something that Jobs with Justice could help with.

We made a room reservation under Yancy's name, paid for the room on a credit card and received a confirmation from an online hotel booking site. After everything was finalized, the Houk family sent Lisa and James to the Ashland Motel to check in but the couple was turned away by management.

According to Lisa Yancy, she said she felt she and her husband were discriminated against for being poor. Even after she explained the room was paid for by Jobs with Justice so her husband, a Gulf War veteran who is sick with the flu could recover. "Not everyone who is homeless is on drugs. People fall on hard times."

We went to the Ashland motel themselves to see what the issue was because they have never had trouble in the past and states the motel has always been really accommodating to vulnerable communities.

The management explained that the motel was under a new owner and that Debit/Credit Cards with matching I.D. would be the only acceptable payment/reservation. A cash payment including a generous deposit was offered but refused by management. In the past Jobs with Justice have been able to pay cash for rooms along with \$50 to \$150 deposit. However, this manager would not accept any cash for a one-night motel stay. When asked to get a copy of the policy, the motel was unable to provide one.

Fortunately, the Yancy's were able to find a motel in Talent, just outside of Ashland and have since recovered and found work. We believe not accepting cash is wrong because puts people like the Yancy's at an unfair disadvantage, please support HB 4107 A.