

My name is Rev. Dr. Kevin Orr. I am an elder in the United Methodist Church and serve three congregations located on the Hilltop in west Columbus. I have served in this community since 2019. For various reasons, there is a high concentration of residents in my community who are unhoused and are living in vehicles, couch surfing, sleeping in tents or in the open air. One of the consequences of living this way is the inability to secure one's belongings. Theft is common, including the loss of important documents. Going through the process of replacing those documents are challenging. Accessing and completing the necessary paperwork is one thing. Coming up with the money to pay the fees also creates a barrier. In addition, for me it is a matter of justice. Why should people be required to pay fees for these documents when they are victims of crime or due to their life circumstances are not able to access those documents or keep them secured?

I recently spoke with Matt, who is currently living on the land. I asked him if he had ever lost his ID or birth certificate. He said he had several times. I asked how this happened to him. He said it was due to theft, or sometimes accidentally leaving his ID on the bus. "I'm just bad about that," he said. When I told him about how it is in the works to try to remove the fees you must pay to get a replacement ID card or birth certificate and asked him if that would be helpful, Matt said it definitely would help him.

I later saw Matt at the corner of Sullivant and Hague, begging for money while people in their vehicles waited for the light to change. I can only assume that the bag he had with him was all he had. Not having those documents that help identify you creates significant barriers to overcome the challenges that those who are homeless have to deal

with. I imagine that for some, the obstacles become so much that they nearly give up and resign themselves to life on the streets.

What I do know about those who are homeless is that they are resilient. They find a way to get through their day. They do the best they can with the resources available to them. If just a few obstacles could be removed, like the fees that must be paid to secure those necessary documents, that can go a long way in the pursuit of a better quality of life that all of us, housed or unhoused share. I urge support for this legislation.