(9/29/10): City Council Further Criminalizes Poor

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Cincinnati NAACPCINCINNATI, OHIO - SEPTEMBER 29, 2010 - .Councilman Jeff Berding is leading an effort today to arrest and fine poor people who beg for money downtown. The poor will be subject to 6 months in jail and a $250 fine. This ordinance does not reflect the values of the citizens of Cincinnati. This ordinance is a great example of everything wrong with city hall and why the Cincinnati NAACP continues to advocate for a new voting system called Proportional Representation (PR). "Only a monster would propose legislation that criminalizes the poor in the middle of an economic great depression," Christopher Smitherman, president of the Cincinnati NAACP said. . Citizens that are poor are not criminals. It is not a crime to be poor. The poor in America still have their First Amendment Rights. Each Council Member is considered a highly compensated individual. Berding and Bortz most likely make more than $250,000 a year in personal income. The other 7 members of council all make more than $100,000 a year. "Council does not know what it is like to be poor and engage in class warfare instead of teaching citizens how to say no. However, the most sinister part of the ordinance is the goal of council to make an argument about over crowding jails," Smitherman says.