

Cities crack down on panhandlers

by UPI

NEW YORK - U.S. cities are cracking down on panhandling, with a dozen bans against begging passed nationwide and more pending. Cities from Medford, Ore., to Orlando, Fla., have barred panhandling, and rules are close to adoption in Texas, Hawaii, North Carolina and Washington, USA Today said. Efforts to redevelop downtown areas and cater to tourists are partly behind the push, Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, told USA Today. "No one likes to see destitute people in the city center," she said. "No one likes to walk down the street and be asked for change." Some panhandling rules have been struck down, including one in Oregon, because courts agreed they infringe on constitutionally protected speech. "We believe that people have a right to beg, and citizens have a right to give or not to give," Michael Stoops, acting director of the Washington-based National Coalition for the Homeless, told USA Today.

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