**AoW:**

**Directions:**

1. **Mark your confusion. 2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions, labels, comments and pictures. 3. Write a one-page reflection on your own sheet of paper.**

**UPDATE:**[**James Speet, Ernest Sims will each get $6,500, city attorney says.**](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/10/Grand%20Rapids%20panhandlers%20share%20$13,000,%20ACLU%20receives%20rest%20of%20$48,000%20settlement)

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Two men who successfully challenged the state’s panhandling law have reached a settlement of their lawsuit against the city.

City commissioners on Tuesday, Oct. 8, approved a $48,000 settlement with James Speet and Ernest Sims.

No court documents have been filed about a settlement.

Speet and Sims filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids against the city and state after being arrested for panhandling. Speet held a sign, while Sims asked for spare change.

Grand Rapids police had enforced the state laws 399 times between Jan. 1, 2008, and May 24, 2011, the American Civil Liberties Union said.

U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker determined the state law, criminalizing peaceful panhandling, violates the First Amendment. A federal appellant court affirmed that the state law was unconstitutional.

ACLU attorney Miriam Aukerman said: “Jail time is a harsh price to pay for holding up a sign or simply asking for spare change.”

The ACLU of Michigan said that “the state’s anti-begging law is unconstitutional because peaceful panhandling – like requests for charity by nonprofits, sport teams or the Salvation Army — is protected speech under the First Amendment.”

Aukerman on Wednesday, Oct. 9, said the focus of the lawsuit was to change the law. The agreement to settle resolves claims the plaintiffs brought against the city for their arrests.

Aukerman, who would not disclose terms of the proposed settlement, called the case a win for “free speech and treating people equally.”

City and state officials, in challenging Jonker’s ruling, had concerns about safety, pedestrian and vehicle traffic, protection of businesses and tourism, and fraud.

Jonker said earlier: “Begging plainly conveys a message: it communicates, whether verbally or non-verbally, a request for financial or material assistance.

“A beggar’s message is analogous to other charitable solicitation: in both situations, the speaker is soliciting financial assistance, the beggar for him or herself, and the charitable fundraiser for a third party. Courts have held repeatedly that charitable solicitations are a form of protected speech.”

The state filed an affidavit from the executive director of a local agency for the homeless who said, “the great majority of people panhandling for money are using the money for alcohol and drugs.”

John Agar covers crime for MLive/Grand Rapids

Possible responses:

1. Agree/Disagree with ideas presented in the text. For example do you think that people should be allowed to panhandle?
2. React to how the ideas in the text relate to your own experience.
3. Connect to how the ideas in the text relate to something else you read.
4. Analyze the audience and author’s purpose.