

5 March 2021

To the Oregon House Committee On Judiciary:

Street Books is a bicycle-powered mobile library bringing books and reading glasses to people living outside and at the margins of Portland. For the past ten years, we've been privileged to get to know and love many of our library patrons. We know what they like to read (from JK Rowling to Margaret Atwood to Stephen King) and we know about their hopes and their sorrows. We also know that like all humans, they need rest and protection from harm.

We support the passage of HB 2367, as it protects individuals' right to move freely, rest, sleep, pray and be protected in public space without discrimination. The right to rest is a basic human and civil right for all people and should not be considered a crime. Criminalizing people who are experiencing houselessness is not an effective solution to the complications that arise when people in our communities do not have a place to eat, rest or sleep.

The closure of public spaces due to the pandemic means that those living outside are more exposed to the elements than ever. Add to this the number of people on the verge of losing their housing, and it makes sense to focus energy not on criminalizing individuals who have nowhere to go but on expanding affordable housing in the urban areas.

In the years we've operated the library we've seen our patrons being swept from their tents, losing belongings and being told to move along but not offered a place to move to. This cycle is traumatic for our patrons and I believe it is also harmful to those officers who are tasked with displacing people but given no solution for where they should go. The policy is simply bad for humans all around.

Our community deserves better. Until everyone has a safe place to sleep, we need bills like HB 2367 to prevent the criminalization of houselessness. Please support this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Laura Moulton
Executive Director, Street Books
<http://streetbooks.org>



STREET BOOKS

www.streetbooks.org

a bicycle-powered,
mobile library
for people
living outside.

A 501c3 non-profit
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Street Books
PO Box 13642
Portland, OR 97213