

HB 2367

This testimony is in support of HB2367.

My name is Diana Rempe and I am the community outreach director and a street librarian at Street Books, a mobile street library that brings books and glasses to people living outside and on the margins in Portland. For the past 9 years I have worked out on the streets of Portland. Because I am at the same places every week I have had the opportunity to get to know people very well. I have found that although the particulars of their stories are very different, almost all of them share the similar experiences of repeated harassment by the police and the loss of their belongings, over and over again.

It is hard to describe the profound impact recurrent displacement has on a person's life. In most cases it means that the person has to completely start over. No clothes, no sleeping bag, no shelter over their head. They are entirely vulnerable and exhausted. This is especially difficult for women, who often are put in even more dangerous positions as they scramble to obtain the most basic necessities. People lose their IDs in sweeps and are left unable to find work or travel. People often lose their jobs after being swept because they no longer have housing or neighbors to watch over their stuff when they go to work. In a particularly heartbreaking event, I knew a woman who lost her belongings and with them, the only picture of her dead child.

HB2367 is an important way to meaningfully affect the lives of the unhoused. HB2367 offers people surviving on the street some respite, through giving them the right to rest and to live their lives without the constant fear of being moved and harassed, simply for existing in the public view.

Please pass HB2367. It is an important step in our fight to end the trauma of homelessness.

Thank you,
Diana Rempe, PhD.
North Portland