

I AM ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY ON HB 2367 BUT CANNOT FIND A WAY TO DO SO.

I fully support both HB 2367 and HB 3115. It is past time to stop criminalizing people who are experiencing houselessness. If you did not have a home, where would you go? Where would you sleep? Use the bathroom? Shower? Charge your phone? Reheat a meal? Relax for the evening? Simply attempting to do any of these things while homeless is a crime in our current status quo, and this MUST change. People in power need to fight for the rights of the people, and, as it stands, those in power have made it so that someone who cannot afford a bed in this ballooning housing crisis may find themselves in prison simply for trying to sleep. Trying to find a place to store and organize their belongings. Trying to establish a life that does not fit neatly into one suitcase, because none of our lives fit neatly into one suitcase.

It is well-known at this point that over 50% of arrests by PPB in 2019 were on people experiencing houselessness. This is ABSURD! Not only does PPB have way too much funding, but they use that funding to criminalize people simply doing everything in their power to survive and trying to catch a foothold in a generally ruthless job and housing market. It breaks my heart immensely to know that this is where so much of our taxes are going to. Can we calculate how much money was spent by PPB observing, arresting, processing paperwork, and jailing unhoused citizens? What if we used ONLY that money to provide more low-income housing for people? I know this wouldn't cover the full need, but it would be a start and we need to establish a community in which people are actually given a chance stabilize themselves after falling into the chaos of houselessness.

Long-term housing must be the goal. That is a long way off, so the VERY LEAST we can do in the meantime is ensure that folks will not be arrested for simply trying to exist. Thank you for choosing to support those among us searching for stability and a comfortable place to rest.