

March 9, 2021

To Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, and Power, Members of the Committee:

My name is Caitlyn Kennedy Young, and I oversee a tenant education program. I am asking for your support of House Bill 3115. HB 3115 would allow houseless members of our community the ability to have dignity in the community without the persistent fear of penalization or criminalization for the mere act of being houseless.

As I said before, I oversee a tenant education program. This program teaches tenants about their rights and responsibilities as renters. Many of the individuals this program serves are participants within shelters across Oregon with recent gaps in their housing history or extended amounts of time having to survive in public places.

Even though I believe that housing is a human right that is unfortunately not always shared within the society we live in. Many individuals have to seek safety, shelter, and survival in places that are not meant for living. While living on the streets or in cars, individuals experience harassment, fines, sweeps, and having to make the hard decision on where to seek rest and safety. Before the work that I do now, I worked at a domestic violence shelter for individuals fleeing from unsafe situations. Many of the single individuals, mostly women, that were in the shelter at that time had experienced being forced to trade their bodies and sex for safety on the streets and a safe place to sleep.

There are already enough dangers, stressors, and uncertainties for these individuals that have no other choice but to reside in a public space that we do not need to add more barriers between them and their safety and survival. Policies that limit sitting, lying, sleeping, or keeping warm and dry in public outdoor spaces profoundly impact the survival and ultimate successes of those transitioning from houselessness into housing.

HB 3115 would alleviate that additional pressure and burden that houseless individuals have on them when trying to not only survive but thrive and move into the next phase of their housing journey. HB3115 is one of the mini tools that we have in our toolkit that can alleviate Oregon's housing and homelessness crisis. Your support is paramount to passing HB3115, thus ensuring that we can continue supporting all our community members across Oregon in building a brighter, safer future for all. Thank you so much for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,



Caitlyn Kennedy Young