

My name is Leah Jo Carnine. I am a family medicine healthcare provider writing in support of HB3124. It's been alarming to see the ways years of national dis-investment from public and affordable housing, coupled with local gentrification, not-in-my-backyard classism and racism, and the climate-crisis induced fires this fall have created an untenable housing crisis. The city's response to this crisis has been to criminalize poverty and homelessness—and conduct sweeps that attack people's basic right to rest, sit, sleep, eat, and adhere to CDC guidelines of sheltering in place during the pandemic. While the frequent sweeps of encampments with nowhere for people to go disproportionately harm unhoused individuals, they negatively impact our entire community. As a healthcare provider, I sometimes provide care to unhoused individuals who need it. I have firsthand experience seeing the way that these sweeps negatively impact the health and wellness of people in the camps-- it increases their stress levels, contributing to worsening management of chronic health conditions, it risks the spread of COVID19 because individuals are forced to relocate rapidly instead of quarantining in place, and it increases the levels of anxiety, depression and worsening mental health crises that people are experiencing. Further, a number of my primary care clinic patients are marginally housed, unhoused, or one crisis away from joining the growing number of unhoused residents and facing the perilous conditions of forced sweeps and forced displacement by the City. Living in a city that systematically neglects shelter as a basic human right disrupts the moral and economic fabric of our city, and it is our collective responsibility to come up with actual solutions that work for all of us. While HB3124 is just a small band aid to a growing crisis that needs real solutions, increasing the amount of notice to 72-hours before sweeps, and requiring storage time of personal property to increase from 30 to 90 days will have small but substantial impacts on people most affected by the housing crisis. I urge you to support this bill, while working towards bigger and bolder solutions that actually meet the housing needs of all people in Eugene.