

Preventing people from sleeping demonstrates a lack of value for people's dignity and worth. Citizens and residents need to be able to trust that issues of justice are being recognized, particularly as they impact the most vulnerable people in our community.

Being houseless, without property or basic resources, or being mentally ill and in crisis is not criminal. More policing, ticketing, rousting and sweeping out of sight only addresses the irrational fears of the propertied forces and compounds the problems. It takes courage to not do the bidding of monied forces that demand emotionally insensitive responses through immediate actions that are both ineffective financially and are inhumane. Budget savings occur when decriminalizing the poor and when working compassionately and constructively to rebuild damaged lives.

To open minds and identify possible paths for building compassionate communities, an easy and quick read is "Start Here" by Greg Berman and Julian Adler, a book published almost three years ago. It is a road map to the beginning of a variety of positive work occurring in many states that decriminalizes being poor and vulnerable in numerous ways.

Please build help instead of fear. Pass the Right to Rest Act and begin Oregon on the road map of justice. Start here.

Let us build a State of which our children will be proud.

Thank you.

Carol Scherer