

I am a member of a very small church in Eugene, Eugene Mennonite. We have financially--and often physically--supported agencies in our town that provide services to houseless members of our community, such as the Eugene Mission, the Dining Room, Egan Warming Center, Carry It Forward, etc. We have recently written a grant for \$1000 to be matched by \$1000 from a supportive Mennonite agency for the organization, The Way Home, which is currently very active in providing services to individuals, as well as pursuing ways the City of Eugene and the Eugene police can put in place procedures that are more humane. Here is my main point: churches and supportive organizations cannot provide all that is needed for homeless individuals. Even though members of my church are currently providing laundry services for 12 "homeless" camps in Eugene, and are in the process of building storage boxes which attach to the Conestoga huts all around town so individuals can safely store their possessions, THAT ISN'T ENOUGH! I am urging you, our elected legislators, to take STEP ONE, which is to pass HB 2367, and end the inhumane practice of "sweeps," without providing people with an alternative place to go. Until people are not criminalized for simply existing, and until our communities provide safe places for them to exist, churches and organizations can continue to provide as many services as we possibly can, but that does not--and can not--address the root causes of homelessness. As a community, I believe Eugene is finally starting to address homelessness as an issue we cannot ignore, but ending the sweeps by passing HB 2367 will take that inhumane option of dealing with this issue off the table--and allow us to spend money, time, and energy in real problem-solving. Thank you.