

Support HB 2367 - The Right to Rest Act

From Church Women United of Lane County

We support The Right to Rest Act and we urge you to pass HB 2367.

As Christians, we support the Right to Rest Act HB 2367. We believe that "sweeping" campsites, and criminalizing homelessness are inhumane ways to handle the crisis of homelessness. Often, our unsheltered neighbors have literally no place else to go, and HB 2367 would ensure that all Oregonians have the right to exist in public space without the threat of harassment, citation, or arrest. This is especially problematic during this pandemic. Many have questioned the legality of criminalizing homelessness.

In Lane County, we homeless advocates would like to see more outdoor areas designated for camping, rather than publishing a long and complicated set of rules specifying where people cannot camp. Eugene officials state that their reason for disassembling the camps is concern for the unhealthy and unsafe conditions in these camps. Wouldn't it be more efficient as well as humane for people to remain in the same place with ample dumpsters, portapotties, and hand washing stations, rather than to disperse them to find other outdoor locations which will be disbanded once again?

Further, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness states in its December 4, 2015 report by Executive Director Matthew Doherty, on page4:

"When there are thousands of people experiencing homelessness, many of them unsheltered, sleeping on our streets, in our parks, with literally not even a roof over their heads, that is a crisis that deserves our urgent attention and action. But we need to make sure that we don't respond with ineffective solutions; we need to ensure that we respond with solutions that we know will work - Housing First approaches..."

As Oregon tax payers and voters, we want you, our elected representatives to pass this critically needed HB 2367.

We continue to witness this ongoing emergency in Oregon and to examine your responses to it.

Thank you for your work.

Anne O'Brien and Sarita Lief on behalf of Church Women United of Lane County
[Agreed to Differ/Resolved to Love/United to Serve]