

To Oregon lawmakers,

I write to show my support for HB 2367. I have become personally attached to the effort to end sweeps in the past eight months or so, as I have come to know more and more of the houseless people in Portland and to see what they go through on a daily basis. I know someone whose wife died as a result of her medication being confiscated during a sweep. I know people who have been swept for decades, repeatedly, typically once a month or more frequently. The commonality among all of their experiences is the need and desire to have a place to rest, and the practice of displacement as a constant threat to that need. Many of my friends and acquaintances on the streets talk about how sweeping destroys their stability, makes it very difficult to keep their space clean, and robs them of personal possessions that are extremely difficult to retrieve once they have been taken. Many talk about the trauma of the sweep itself, and I have seen people go into crisis mode when they find out that they are being swept, again, and then wait for days and days to find out what day they will be awakened from their tents and alerted that it's time to move.

The practice of sweeping is beyond disrespectful; it seems like a call to end people's lives. To make them so difficult that they cannot recover. Some people on the streets struggle with mental conditions and drug addictions, and the fact that their needs, for medical and mental care, food, housing, general support, are met with sweeps, is infuriating, as it only makes matters worse and more difficult to recover from, and hurts the communities of care that exist wherein people support one another.

I am very much looking forward to the end of sweeps, and a step toward basic rights and dignity for those living on the streets.