

Submitter: Michelle Abbey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Human Services
Measure: HB4079

I am vehemently opposed to HB 4079. First, I'm really tired of the fact that because I've worked hard and made decisions in my life to bring myself from poor-middle class, to living comfortably, that I get taxed because of my hard work, to reward many for not making good decisions. It is because of the support of systems such as this that more and more people are just going to rely on the increasing amount of handouts provided INSTEAD OF OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS USING THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS THEY RECEIVE FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN AND THE CARES ACT to just throw money at people, thinking that will improve and prevent further homelessness.

Take that money and invest it into strategies that have been better proven in reversing homelessness, such as permanent housing, access to healthcare, building career pathways, reducing criminal justice involvement, and building (WORTHY) partnerships, according to our own US INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS.

This "stipend" is only throwing a band aid on the real issues and will just dig us deeper into the homeless hole. I believe in providing valuable, long-term support to the homeless and near homeless, none of which includes giving money away. We have over 47 agencies JUST in Central Oregon that service those in need of food and shelter. One organization distributed over 4.1 MILLION pounds of food just in 2020! The homeless and indigent have more resources here than I do! (I should know, I work in the nonprofit industry).

To actually address the homeless problem involves formulating a well thought out strategic plan, involving entire communities that are working together, not duplicating services, and increasing employment and income, as stated by THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS. There is nothing well thought out or strategic about a stipend check. It doesn't take much thought to throw money at people.

This tax=stipend check is just another band aid, another quick fix. It reminds me of the same culture that still buys into diets for weight loss instead of making life-long lifestyle changes. Have you noticed a decrease in the obesity epidemic? Well, the same will happen with the homelessness situation if you employ this solution. And don't forget the large group of tax-paying constituents who are already preparing to leave this state if it continues to provide more and more handouts that will motivate more people to stay under the poverty level to collect their assistance. This is NOT the culture we want to encourage...anywhere!