

Submitter: Mary Rehmann

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

As a resident of Portland for almost 25 years, I am saddened and appalled by how active encouragement of poor housing services and programs have changed the heart and soul of our community. I am not in one of the hardest hit areas, but I can say that my Woodstock neighborhood has changed dramatically in the past 3 years. I no longer feel safe walking by myself to my local grocery store, as I must walk past many RVs and parked cars where it is clear that drugs are being sold (witness the RV parked semi-permanently behind Safeway with a steady line of people waiting outside its door). I have watched a person “camped” in a doorway between Ace Hardware and Grand Central scream obscenities at a toddler walking past with her mom. Just last week, I watched a “camper” shoplift huge packages of ribs from Safeway, run through the parking lot, and get into an RV parked in the street in front of Bi-Mart.

In short, I think this proposal is obscene. RVs and people living in parked cars in the city are not campers. Portland residents deserve better: walkable streets, a sense of safety, police and civic services that understand that people - ALL PEOPLE - deserve to be treated with respect and compassion. Frankly, allowing people to live in filth and to wreck the environment and cause havoc to other citizens is not compassionate or respectful.

This bill will further drive tax payers away from Portland. I love this city, but between this proposal and the proposed capital gains tax, I can't help but begin to consider moving out. I hope representatives can possibly grasp that a city that loses its tax base is doomed.

We can and should consider better services and more timely enactment of policies already in place. (The RV site that has been funded and still sits empty, for example — Vancouver got theirs up and running in a month, yet ours sits and waits for over 5 months.) Allowing parked RVers to SUE those who ask them to move? Preposterous.

Get real about REAL solutions. Stop enabling and even encouraging the degradation of our communities. Get compassionate - truly compassionate - about providing services that will help move people out of houseless situations, not further cement the squalor that comes with streets lined with rotting cars and campers. If you're not sure what else to do about it, then please talk to your constituents: we have plenty of humane ideas. This bill is a farce and must be tested as such.