

Submitter: Amanda Elliott

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Oregon House Bill 3501, which would establish the Oregon Right to Rest Act and grant persons experiencing homelessness the right to use and move freely in public spaces without discrimination and time limitations.

This bill ignores the fact that the underlying causes of homelessness are drug use and mental disorder, which require treatment and intervention, not encouragement and protection. By allowing homeless encampments to proliferate in public spaces, this bill would endanger the health and safety of both the homeless population and the general public, as well as degrade the environment and quality of life in our communities.

Furthermore, this bill would limit the legal ability of Oregonians to combat the crime, looting, and defacing of the city that often accompany homeless encampments. It would expose property owners, businesses, local governments and law enforcement officers to frivolous lawsuits and hefty attorney fees for enforcing reasonable regulations and ordinances. It would also undermine the efforts of social service agencies and nonprofits that work to provide shelter, housing and assistance to those in need.

I urge you to vote against this bill and instead support solutions that address the root causes of homelessness and respect the rights and interests of all Oregonians.