

Submitter: Gretchen Olson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today regarding HB 3501. While I feel for the plight of those who are homeless, this would decimate our cities and make it unlivable for those of us who follow the rules and am a productive member of society. Look at downtown Portland and all the businesses that are running out of there as fast as they can. It is a ghost town. It isn't safe to be down there. You can't walk the streets without being accosted, yelled out, spit on or generally just bothered. I won't go anywhere near downtown because of this.

I work for a municipality and the homeless sleep under our building in the parking garage. We have had sexual assaults, verbal assaults and being followed, not to mention the human waste that our day porters have to clean up. It is disgusting. We have also put up two porta potties in order to help with this, and yet they still use the corners of the buildings as their bathroom. Having 'rights' to privacy and all that is not conducive to a safe place for employees to come into work. If this bill passes, our parking garage will be filled with tents, dogs, waste and drugs. Please don't let this happen. We won't be able to move them, they will say they have the right to be there, they will destroy our safe working environment. We already have security everyday to help protect us, but even that doesn't make us feel safe at times.

I understand that they are people and they have rights too, but if this passes, we will be living in slums where they can put up their tents and never have to move, because this is now their home and their land. That is ridiculous. We shouldn't have to put up with that, nor have to put up with sexual assaults, verbal assaults or anything of that nature. We should be able to live in our communities without having to worry about walking outside and being safe. We pay the taxes, we follow the rules, we don't do the drugs and treat everyone else like crap.

I think camping would be fine, but only for over night. Look at New York city and how they do it. 10pm to 7am you are allowed to camp. You can't block the sidewalks (ADA) and it is clean and orderly. Why can't we do that. Come on, we can do better, but not THIS. This would give them squatters rights, which is already out of control.

This is not the way and this is not the answer. We need more mental health help, and addiction help, not giving them more reasons to stay on the street and accost the regular folks who are following the society rules. We can't enable them to continue the behavior. It's just like children. You want to fix it, give them consequences for their actions, not rewards.

Please do not enable their bad behavior by giving them the rights to ruin our streets, communities and our way of life. There is a better way.

Thank you,  
Gretchen Olson