

Testimony on HB 3501

I like many people across this state are concerned about the unhoused population. They are in need of assistance and should be directed to safe sleep sites. However giving squatters rights to the common public spaces without recourse to keep the public areas functioning for all of the citizens is a great loss for the general public and the unhoused. I agree that people should not be arrested or thrown in jail, that would not be a benefit for anyone. But, allowing a tent community to flourish on a sidewalk or in a green strip Infront of a business is the definition of fragility of the commons.

There is a public right of way in front of every house, that area should stay public. When we grant rights to anyone that wants to set up a tent we are giving control of that space over to anyone who wants to take it.

We are not in the wild west anymore. We have privacy rights as property owners. Those rights are of course more than those that don't own property. Those that are not owners are then subject to rules and regulations of the community. There should be a safe available space, but it needs to be controlled by the community, not the wims of any individual.

Giving free access to all open spaces is a recipe for more tent communities and after the "occupy" experience, I would say that encampments only grow. I have never seen a tent community that encourages the occupants to get off drugs or to get education or to get long term stable housing. They are not stepping stones up off the street; they are enabling the minimum necessity to extend and prolong an unhoused living situation. It should not be encouraged!

Respectfully,
Forrest Laiche