

Submitter: Catherine Watts

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Greetings.

In reading through the proposed bill, I see in section 4(6)(b) that any homeless person can "rest" on any "public space" including sidewalks and parks. Speaking as a homeowner, I am required to maintain the sidewalks and parking strips surrounding my home, yet this would prohibit me from forcing a homeless person off the sidewalk or parking strip next to my house, with the threat of a \$1000 fine for doing such. Speaking as a taxpayer, our public parks should not be allowed to become campgrounds, but this would allow camping in our parks. I do not vote for bond measures for public parks so that the Oregon legislature can turn them into homeless campgrounds.

While I admit the homeless are a huge problem, as a native (and fairly liberal) Oregonian I cannot allow this bill to pass without comment. The homeless in my city, which I believe at last count was under 6000, are holding us hostage. We have spent over a billion dollars and have nothing to show for it except more crime and an influx of addicts coming to the city to use drugs risk free. This would give the homeless a \$1000 incentive to be worse than they already are and accuse homeowners and business owners of harassment in order to get a payday. You will create a cottage industry of attorneys working in tandem with the homeless to shake down the rest of us. Not to mention Section (4)(1) defines harassment towards the homeless as a crime without acknowledging their harassment of the rest of us citizens.

We need to stop coddling the homeless and, instead of allowing them carte blanche to camp anywhere, we need to force them to start following the rules that the rest of society adheres to. If they want assistance, there need to be rules in order to receive funds that hard working taxpayers are forced to pay. If they don't like the rules, they can stop sucking off the taxpayers teat and look for assistance elsewhere. But you cannot expect Oregonians to allow the homeless to "rest" on any piece of property they see fit to occupy. Taxpayers pay for those spaces and you will effectively remove them from use by the citizens of Oregon.

RV and tent camping on city streets should be illegal. Set aside spaces for the tents and trailers or build soviet-style bloc housing to get them off the streets, but allowing them to "rest" on sidewalks, and in parks, and on any publicly owned piece of property is not the way to move forward.

My family has been here since the early 1950's - my grandfather started a business

here that is still going and employs nearly 100 people - but one by one I have seen my family move out of state taking their tax dollars with them; this is just another slap in the face to hard-working, middle-class Oregonians, and a reminder that our needs do not matter and that we are merely an open pocketbook because we are responsible and have jobs. I never thought I would leave Oregon, but this bill might just force me out.

Catherine Watts, SE Portland