

House committee on Housing and Homelessness

HB 3501 is an ill-conceived bill that does not focus on the root causes of homelessness in Oregon. By granting these rights to individuals suffering from homelessness you would turn every park in Oregon into a residential neighborhood and every street into a mobile home park. What happens when an individual suffering from homelessness wants to set up residence on the basketball court or commandeer the dugout? Where will children play? What happens to my property value when someone parks their RV in front of my home and takes up residence? Does their temporary condition become a permanent residence and they can be evicted? What about folks with mobility issues and the disabled, who can't use the public sidewalks because they are now someone's residence? What about the jobs for working Oregonians that go away because the business they work for closes or relocates which causes a greater strain on an already strained budget? What about the environmental impact of unregulated dumping of trash in public spaces, fire hazards from cooking fires, and the pollution of our waterways and lands?

I appreciate the desire to help but it is misdirected. Why are we focusing on perpetuating the problem when we should be spending state funds on getting the mentally ill and drug addicted off the streets instead of allowing them to be abused and preyed upon. We need funding for housing at state mental health hospitals and beds for recovery services. We need to get the people who cannot take care of themselves off the streets. It is inhumane to facilitate their suffering and not care for them. We need transitional housing for those who are experiencing temporary homelessness to get back on their feet. We need to take a hard look at those who are permanently homeless and decide as a society are we willing to let them suffer?