

Submitter: Autumn Sharp

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I have only lived in Oregon since 2019 and have been flabbergasted by how overwhelming the homelessness problem is here and how inept the government is at coming up with solutions for it.

There seems to be a new camp set up every week by my house or work and with each camp comes an onslaught of issues that are concerning for the community. I have had to call non-emergency to have someone help with used needles that were left in the parking lot of my work, animal control to help with a pair of dogs running leash-less from a camp into my neighborhood park, and city workers to clean up human feces in the public areas of downtown. These are all health and safety concerns for our community. It is not sanitary or safe to have camps be able to be put up on any public space and allow them to stay up indefinitely, as Bill 3501 is proposing.

The homeless camps also bring about issues for the community in terms of business and recreation. I have seen camps in downtown Salem that are set up right next to businesses and I have watched businesses have to close or relocate due to issues with the homeless in those camps (ex. trash, vandalism, theft, & harassment). How is it fair to those businesses (especially the local 'ma & pa' shops) that camps stay put but the businesses are the ones forced to relocate?

When I first moved here, I was so excited to go to some of the amazing parks in and around Salem- especially some of the disc golf courses. However, I soon realized that a good percentage of the parks and courses have been completely taken over by homeless camps. Want an example? Just look up "Cascade Gateway Disc Golf Course" and read the Google reviews. Or look at some of the photos reviews for "Wallace Marine Park". How is it fair to the families who just want to enjoy the park on the river, but have to spend their 'recreation' time on the lookout for used needles? For a state that praises itself for it's environmental focus, it is pretty ironic that more and more bills are being proposed to allow more camps that will litter this beautiful state with trash.

I want to end this saying that I do not have anything against anyone who finds themselves without a home and in a homeless camp- life can be difficult and drag you down at any moment. I know it could easily happen to me and I could find myself in their shoes at any point. What I am against is this government allowing this beautiful state to turn into a giant homeless camp one bill at a time. Instead of using your resources to pass bills that are not solving the problem, why don't you put those resources into converting empty warehouses and stores into shelters? Why don't you use your resources to provide trash and sharps containers to the camps already in place so you can help curb some of the safety and health issues that come with homeless camps? Why don't you stop putting a band-aid on this open wound and

actually start coming up with a plan to heal the wound completely? Oregon is a beautiful state, but it will not stay like that for long until some *real* change comes from this government.

Thank you for your time in hearing my opposition.