

Submitter: Benjamin Drasin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

This bill would allow camping on sidewalks and in parks. I can think of few things more destructive to such livability as remains in Portland (and, I expect, other cities), nor of anything more hostile to working families who rely on the parks for recreation. The liberal use of euphemisms in the text of the bill (e.g. "rest in public spaces and seek protection from adverse weather conditions that are unsuitable for human exposure", meaning people can set up tents and other structures) strikes me as quite underhanded.

I, and the great majority of the citizens of the state, want the state legislature to work to humanely end urban camping, not to expand it. We need not, and indeed must not, make ending urban camping contingent on ending homelessness. There are many other North American cities with significant homeless populations but little to no street camping: Boston, Atlanta, Miami, Dallas (there are probably others, these are just ones I've visited recently). The difference is these other cities have adequate shelter space and don't permit camping.

As such, this bill represents a big step backwards. Instead you should be concentrating on expanding shelters so that there are enough to fully house the unhoused population, and moving people off the streets to shelters while we ramp up the supply of permanent supported housing.

My family is strongly looking at relocating out of state due to poor livability and high taxes. Bills like this are pushing us even more to move, and I know we are not alone.