

I strongly oppose HB 3501. I am 37 year old, born and raised in Portland OR. I have resided in NE Portland and worked in the downtown area over the years since I was 16.

House bill 3501 is a prime example of “advocating” for the house less community in a way that will have dire consequences for everyone, including the house less community. I worked downtown, in retail near pioneer Square, when Sam Adam’s was in office. It was temporarily imposed to approve loitering. Things immediately went from bad to worse. Businesses were being terrorized, customers were clamoring through houseless people gathered on the streets. The feedback from shoppers, including those residing downtown, was that they no longer wanted to come in and tried to avoid patronizing downtown. They preferred the inconvenience of going further away to shop for safety reasons. What exists now downtown, far exceeds the problem then. Once again, I work downtown. Despite witnessing horrific events on a regular basis, I still maintain compassion for those who have fallen on hard times, suffer from addiction or mental health issues, or have experienced trauma that subsequently has left them in need of help and resources. Any logical person can see that legalization of camping on public property will not contribute to a solution of getting them off of the street. What it will do is insight an even stronger territorial response from those living on the street, increase tension between the houseless and residents, more assaults and crime, more business will leave, and more tax paying residents will move. This proposal is a free for all and would have no way of distinguishing who is receiving the rights to reside outside of businesses and residences...are they violent, felons, or sexual predators? There would be no screenings to determine, just a wait and see scenario. While not everyone who is houseless is dangerous we see that enough are and pose threats to other houseless individuals and the entire community. There is a lawlessness plaguing the streets of Portland and it doesn’t seem City officials are offering actual solutions. With all of the “advocacy” for the house less, a huge disservice to public safety all over the city is being committed. The goal should be to help those in need to get off of the street, not legalizing them to stay on the street. Tax dollars are being collected to maintain the City, while it is simultaneously being legalized to destroy it. Look at the legalization of drug use. Has it proven effective in combating the local drug crisis? The fact that this proposal is even rearing its head should be an embarrassment and give cause to scrutinize the advocacy group the proposer(s) is associated with.