

Submitter: Craig Montag
On Behalf Of: Friends Of Brooklyn Park
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure: HB3501

In the 1950's and 1960's the city of Portland established summer programs for children in dozens of its public parks. The Brooklyn park version began in 1957. The city cut most of these programs in 2017, including Brooklyn's. A fundraising agency -- - "Friends of Brooklyn Park" --- promptly sprang up in the neighborhood, and has kept the program going ever since: 2018 to 2022. I am the director of this summer jewel --- my first summer at the helm was 1978.....I am age 69. I will be in the brick headquarters this summer for 10 weeks, Monday through Friday from noon to 8 pm. It is my second home. And for scores of kids, it is their summer playground. As I read "HB 3501" it appears to allow a person to set up a living space, a tent, a home in a public place. Portland's parks are public spaces. The parks are technically closed from midnight to 5:01 am, but they are still public. The park is a few blocks from the east end of the Ross Island Bridge. The headquarters has a bathroom that is open 8 am to 8 or 9 pm. Several homeless folks walked through the program last summer. Two of them were loud and incoherent --- near children and mothers. I called the police. It seems this bill will permit these citizens to set up camp in the middle of my program, or near by. This is a frightening, very uncomfortable and unpredictable situation. There are other such summer programs in the city---the same thing could happen to them.

If this bill passes some stipulations must be added to it regarding parks with summer programs. Perhaps all parks, year 'round. Parks and summer programs in these parks are wholesome symbols of Portland. In 42 summers over a thousand kids have come through my Brooklyn door; hundreds of parents have let their children go to the park every day for hours --- without hesitation or concern. All that could end.

Thanks for your time

Craig Montag