

Submitter: Barbary Brunner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

House Bill 3501, "Right to Rest", is a ludicrously misguided piece of legislation that will harm those living on our streets, renters and homeowners, make our cities more unsafe than they already are, encourage more civic blight than we already have, drive businesses away, and compounds our already tragic homelessness crisis in our biggest cities.

A compassionate first world, wealthy society does not allow people to live in dangerous conditions where they are constantly exposed to crime, weather extremes, and their personal safety and sanity is constantly compromised in the name of "self sovereignty" and "personal freedom". There is no dignity to living on the streets, and it is cruel to encourage people to do so. In addition, tent communities have a tendency to attract crime and drug use, either directly or by criminal elements who prey upon tent communities, and this results in the creation of unsafe conditions for the housed residence of neighborhoods.

Living in a central Eastside neighborhood, I have been on the receiving end of violent threats from the mentally ill and drug addicted who live in tents and cars in my neighborhood. Living near a park where there are an abundance of unhoused people who threaten passers-by who are out for a daily walk, I frequently hear screams and fights and gunshots in and around the park at night. My neighbors and I do not feel safe walking alone in the middle of the day because of the many frightening encounters we've had with tent and van dwellers.

We all want to solve the homelessness crisis, and we already have the misguided measure 110 preventing us from compelling those addicted to lethal drugs to get help. House Bill 3105 will only compound our already existing problems by making it impossible to move people from tents to shelters or mental health facilities when needed. Portland is already on the verge of being unsafe for everyone in many parts of the city at many times of day; this piece of legislation will cement that fact, and push us deeper into the civic hole that we are already in.

It's nearly impossible for small businesses to operate when they have tents in front of them that drive customers away. This legislation basically sends a signal to our local merchants that we don't care about them, and we're not interested in supporting them. Small business is the heart of what makes a community run economically and preventing small business owners from enlisting civic help to remove a nuisance driving business away from their store by threatening them with fines and legal action as per this Bill will be one of the final nails in the coffin of the charm, desirability and

livability of our Oregon cities.