

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed "Right to Rest" bill currently being considered in your legislative session. While the intentions behind the bill may be well-meaning, I believe that its implementation would have serious negative consequences for both the homeless population and the wider community.

The right to rest bill seeks to grant homeless individuals the right to rest and sleep in public spaces, including sidewalks, parks, and other publicly-owned areas. However, this approach is fundamentally flawed as it fails to address the root causes of homelessness and instead would normalize homelessness as an acceptable condition in society. It would also undermine efforts to improve public safety and the quality of life for all citizens.

Allowing homeless individuals to occupy public spaces indefinitely would lead to unsanitary and unsafe conditions for both the homeless and the general public. It could also lead to an increase in public disturbances and crimes, which would negatively impact the quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the state. This bill also fails to provide any solutions for the long-term needs of the homeless population, such as access to affordable housing, job training, and healthcare services.

Furthermore, granting the right to rest in public spaces would pose serious public health risks. As we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, overcrowding in public spaces can quickly lead to the spread of infectious diseases. Allowing individuals to sleep and congregate in public spaces would increase the risk of disease transmission, not only among the homeless but also among the general public.

In conclusion, I urge you to reject the "Right to Rest" bill and instead focus on finding meaningful solutions to the issue of homelessness. It is imperative that we work to provide affordable housing, job training, and healthcare services to those in need, rather than simply allowing them to camp out in public spaces. Thank you for considering my opinion on this matter.

Sincerely,
Theresa Patton