

Submitter: Beverly Quesenberry
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Commerce and General Government
Measure, Appointment or SB1514
Topic:

Chair Mark Meek and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong opposition to SB 1514.

Do you believe that by criminalizing living on the streets, the people who live on the streets magically disappear? Do you use evidence based decision making? When has criminalizing homelessness solved homelessness? The real problem is affordable housing, and not a few units for people who make less than \$14,000 a year, which is the federal poverty line, which has not been updated in decades and completely ignores inflation and the true cost of living in America. Affordable housing is needed for more than 65% of this country, people that make less than \$60,000 a year. The money used to fund affordable housing, back when we used to tax the rich and make them pay their fair share, was cut by Reagan in the 80's and those actions are the direct result of the affordably housing crisis that we have now across America, not just in Oregon. Please accept reality and stop wasting resources passing laws that do not do anything except harm people and waste tax dollars. I encourage you to investigate the root causes of issues and do the incredibly hard work of solving the root issues.

SB 1514 would repeal Oregon's statewide "objective reasonableness" standard that currently governs how local governments regulate the use of public property by people experiencing homelessness. This standard exists to ensure that restrictions are fair, balanced, and grounded in reality especially when people have nowhere else to go and day shelters are not enough.

Repealing this protection would make it easier for local jurisdictions to enact broad or punitive restrictions without guaranteeing shelter or housing alternatives. That approach does not solve homelessness. It increases instability.

Enforcement-first policies:

Displace people without creating housing

Create legal and financial barriers that make it harder for people to secure housing

Increase strain on emergency systems and service providers

Shift public resources toward enforcement rather than homeless prevention and housing

Oregon's homelessness crisis is rooted in structural issues: a shortage of deeply affordable housing, rising rents, stagnant wages, and gaps in behavioral health services. SB 1514 does not address these root causes.

It is also important to acknowledge that homelessness in Oregon is not race-neutral. Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color are disproportionately impacted due to historic and ongoing systemic inequities. Policies that expand enforcement authority risk deepening those inequities.

Real community safety comes from stability. It comes from investing in eviction prevention, rental assistance, behavioral health services, and culturally responsive supports which are all actual housing-first strategies. We cannot enforce our way out of a housing crisis.

I urge you to reject SB 1514 and instead prioritize solutions that affirm dignity, promote equity, and create lasting pathways to housing stability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.