

Chair Mark Meek and Members of the Committee,

My name is Caitlin Keitel, and I am a mental health therapist and resident of Portland, Oregon. I have ten years of professional experience working directly with people experiencing homelessness. I am writing in strong opposition to SB 1514.

I implore you not to remove the “objective reasonableness” standard that governs how cities and counties in Oregon regulate public space where people are experiencing homelessness.

We know there is a homelessness crisis in Oregon. We know we need solutions. The objectively reasonable solution is to prioritize deeply affordable housing.

From my experience as a front-line worker and mental health therapist, I see 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

Housing First is an evidence based model that improves outcomes - from physical health to mental health, not to mention decreased spending on emergency medical care and incarceration - for individuals, communities, and societies at large.

As lawmakers you are in the position to make structural changes to the way we address homelessness as a state, and to protect individuals who are living the crisis of homelessness.

Please vote No on SB 1514 and continue to invest in solutions that address the root causes of homelessness: deeply affordable housing, health care for all, behavioral health and addiction services, and culturally responsive support for people experiencing homelessness.

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.

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.

