

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

I oppose SB 1514 because I am concerned that it will lead to further trauma and destabilization of our unhoused neighbors and those who are vulnerable or at risk of homelessness. It would be cruel and reckless to repeal the state's "objective reasonableness" standard, which is intended to ensure these human beings are treated with fairness and reason, especially when there is nowhere for them to go. I worry that local jurisdictions will resort to harsher restrictions and enforcement, and punitive enforcement that effectively criminalizes individuals for falling on hard times. Criminalization of homelessness only results in further harm to already struggling individuals and we all end up with public spaces that are palpably inequitable and not "for everyone."

Instead of repealing existing standards, we should focus our energy on addressing the root causes of homelessness: housing is not affordable; wages are too low; there is a lack of services that help people who suffer from PTSD or behavioral health problems; people who witness homelessness tend to misplace blame on the individual rather than the lack of social safety net, affordable housing, healing opportunities, and community that is necessary for each of us to survive and thrive.

I believe that both individual and community wellbeing and safety comes from stability. Let's incentivize a shift in resources away from the enforcement of inhumane policies and towards practical, compassionate solutions. We should be investing in eviction prevention, rental assistance, behavioral health services, and culturally responsive supports. These are all actual housing-first strategies that have proven successful in other places. Using enforcement and punitive measures to address homelessness only leads to further trauma and suffering for these human beings; 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.