

We Are Oregon stands in opposition to HB2963, the PBA's attempt to renew the sit-lie ordinance

Location: HR343

Date/Time: 5/8/13 at 8:30am

Bill: HB2963

We Are Oregon is a 5000 person group that has been organizing with homeowners in the Portland-area to fight unjust evictions and foreclosures. We have direct experience with the banks and business associations that use the legal systems to take families homes. Now they are here in Salem to sweep some of those same families out of the public eye by forcing the sit/lie ordinances back on the table.

We Are Oregon believes in community power and that any policy, if we need it, should be driven by those who most often lack voice in this process - in this case the houseless who PBA is trying to drive from the streets.

The members and families of We Are Oregon - most of whom are not houseless - insist that this proposal be voted down. Kill HB2963 and any other attempts to block people's use of our public spaces.

Some businesses assert that this is a question of cities' authority over their own sidewalks and that there is some "state of emergency", but the emergency is not that people shopping downtown can see the houseless, it's that every day people are being made houseless. Some non-profits assert that they represent the houseless community in supporting this bill, but no one who had the interest of the houseless in mind would desire that they be swept under the rug nor that they be criminalized for sitting in a public space. This bill is actually about the Portland Business Alliance clearly trying to whitewash our city and remove the houseless from downtown.

This affects not only those who need a place to sit, it affects all those who use sit-in or other immobile actions to voice our opinions and influence those in power. Cities should not have the right to independently push what the state has clearly determined is oppressive, unjust, and unconstitutional.

The sidewalks and public spaces across the state must remain vibrant, inviting, and open to those most stripped of voice whether those people are moving, sitting, or lying down.

Again, we insist on a NO vote on HB 2963.