

To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Laura Johnson, Sponsors Inc.
Date: March 9, 2021
RE: HB 3115: Homelessness and Public Space

Chair Bynum and members of the House Judiciary Committee,
We write in support of HB 3115.

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of Reentry services. We operate 20 buildings on seven sites in Lane County with more than 240 units of housing for individuals with conviction histories. We also offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, mental health services and mentoring—supports that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community. We do this because we believe that people can and do change, and that interventions at the appropriate time can serve as a catalyst to lasting change.

We support HB 3115 because it stands for the principle that policing is not the solution to homelessness. We see the ways that enforcement of “livability” laws is harmful to many of the people that we serve. Saddling people living in extraordinarily difficult circumstances with fines they cannot pay and criminal records that create additional barriers to housing and employment has not prevented homelessness, it has created chronic homelessness on a large scale. Research confirms that successful responses to homelessness must include an end to criminalization practices, as well as the provision of housing and supportive services. It is not enough to create housing; we must also prevent harm.

HB 3115 will bring a greater degree of stability, health and community to people in Lane County and across the state. We look forward to participating in those local conversations. We urge your support for HB 3115.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Johnson", written in a cursive style.

Laura Johnson, Director of Program Development
Sponsors, Inc.