

3/11/21

Dear Representative Bynum and House Committee on Judiciary,

In Eugene, where we have the highest homeless population per capita in the nation, we are desperate for sanctioned places for unhoused to camp and park vehicles, with dire need of sanitation support, portapotties, handwashing stations, and garbage removal. Indeed, this session's legislative focus is an important part of a nationwide movement to hold law enforcement accountable for their criminalization of the unhoused, and we **implore you to reschedule HB 2367, an essential piece of legislation which would end the discriminatory enforcement of time, place, and manner laws in Oregon.**

You have probably heard of HB 2367, also known as the Right to Rest Act, largely in terms of how it would impact our unhoused neighbors. It is certainly true that, at alarmingly increasing rates over the past few years, unhoused people are overwhelmingly targeted for sleeping, lying, or sitting down in public space. They are also dramatically overrepresented in the overall arrests and citations recorded for 2019: unhoused people made up over 50% of Portland arrests even though they represent less than 1% of the population; **while in Eugene, 100% of prohibited camping, 88% violation of Park Rules, and 80% of Open Container and Criminal Trespass II were Quality of Life citations against our unhoused neighbors. What these numbers do not capture is the abject suffering and helplessness that people endure when they have no choice but to break the law to survive and nowhere else to go."**

Regardless, **HB 2367 is not a "homeless bill."** Unhoused people are not the only people who are targeted for police contact solely for being in public space, as you know and as shown by the myriad of racially violent stories in which the police are called on people for #WalkingWhileBlack.. When laws exist that can arbitrarily criminalize anyone, there is an immense risk that our legal system will continue to reinforce the oppression of and brutality against non-white, poor citizens, whom police have historically been able to kill and maim with impunity. HB 3115 only slightly addresses this by asking that the time, place, and manner restrictions that criminalize certain people in public space be made reasonable by local municipalities. **While those who determine what is "reasonable" may well continue the status quo, those who would challenge these ordinances are often without legal representation. HB 2367 directly states that people have the right to exist in public space and participate in social and economic life without facing constant threats from discriminatory policing.**

Please reschedule HB 2367, the Right to Rest Act, to be heard by the Judiciary Committee. This legislation is not only the most reasonable and humane response to the statewide housing/homelessness crisis, but also would protect so many others from unnecessary, unwarranted contact with law enforcement. Given the volume of testimony that was submitted up until the moment that the bill was pulled from the agenda, it is clear that your constituents and many others across the state are interested in discussing this bill and sharing their stories with you about this pressing issue. We simply ask that you give us an opportunity to be heard.

Respectfully submitted,
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