

I have been working, independently, with our unsheltered neighbors, in Salem, since mid-December 2018, when I found out about the city's Draconian tent ban, by finding a man, under a tarp soaking wet, with wind blowing through the tarp he was trying to keep wrapped around himself, & water flowing under him, like a creek. He could not walk. He could not get up. He would not let me call 911. He simply cried & demanded, "I need to get to someplace dry." To make a long story short, he wound up losing his leg, from just above the knee, due to a blood clot, in his hip. He is not diabetic. I saw him, just today, in a wheelchair, on State Street, unkempt & alone, but alive, barely. He will die out there. This paragraph only shows the horrible circumstances people without shelter, not even a tent, must endure. The next will point out how impossible it is for them to get shelter.

I worked with a man today, trying to get into Adult Foster Care or Assisted living. After an assessment, he was told he could have help come in, up to 10 hours a week. I asked something like, "So they can sweep up the sidewalk outside Rite Aid, where he will be as soon as this motel program ends?" But, of course, DHS does not help with housing & the client did not qualify for any more care than the 10 hours of housekeeping & help with shopping, because he could wipe his own butt, & get in & out of his wheelchair, when he was well enough, which he was, after spending time, in a motel, but he is not well enough to be given at UGM (& don't even get me started on the inadequacy of UGM). When he first got to the motel, he could NOT care for himself, so his drug addicted brother was sheltered, with him, to care for him. I have asked Jimmy Jones, to get this man on HRAP, but I have been working with another elderly & handicapped person, who has been in the HRAP program for over a month & no one can find housing, that is handicapped accessible, within the HRAP price range. Last week, this woman was kicked out of her niece's apartment, where she had been sleeping, upright, in a chair, then kicked out of a tent she was borrowing, at Cascades Gateway Park, because she did not have a cigarette, to give the owner. With help from Helping Hands, I got this woman set up with a tent & a sleeping bag, but yesterday, I learned that her daughter, from whom she sought help, stole all of her money, her ID & even her food stamp card, AGAIN, & she had to move her tent, because she was being harassed. Fortunately, for her & me, there was a group of people willing to help her move that tent, but I am concerned, at what cost & for how long. June 1st is the rumored date.

I have called Safe Sleep for women, only to find out they are full. Even in this warm weather, the shelter is full. It is full because there is an arsonist, on the loose, a guy with bear spray is on the loose & probably a horde of rapists. I tried to get Salem Police, to do a wellness check, on a woman using the sidewalk around Rite Aid for an abode, because there was a man standing over her, leering & I could not get him to go away. I thought, if there was some police presence, he would go away, but the police would not do that wellness check. The next time I saw her, she had a wound on her face. I see this often, women who have been punched & have the blacked eyes to prove it. I mean I see it on a regular basis, not just once in a while. The only problem, with your bill, is that it doesn't go into effect immediately. I beg of you to enact emergency legislation to stop this inhumane treatment of our own neighbors, instantly. We must step up to the plate & stand for, no demand, moral treatment of any living creature. It is not just lives that are at stake, it is our civil morality that is at stake. This attitude of impunity as we literally cause the suffering & death, of others, is going to become a standard of life, in this country, unless we stand up to the bullies & stop this, right now.