

Chair Jama and members of the committee,

My name is Heather Sielicki and I am speaking today on my own behalf. I work in the social services sector as the administrative operations coordinator for White Bird Clinic and serve on the Eugene Human Rights Commission. I am Vice-Chair of the Lane Coalition for Organizations active in disaster. I've seen how in times of crisis, whether winter storms or wildfires, those with the greatest needs have been overlooked in community planning and response. I've learned just how much the lack of shelter and housing impacts our community safety in all conditions.

I've spent the past decade working with community-based organizations, advocates, and legislators to improve conditions for people living unhoused and remove the barriers to exiting homelessness. I've learned it is impossible to untangle the relationship between the theft of indigenous land and racist past from current land use practices and housing policy priorities in Oregon. We must do better.

I come here today to speak in favor of house bill 3124 because it opens up two actionable, practical ways to reduce unintended harm from practices designed during different times to penalize individuals for their status.

The first way it does this is by giving people a chance to work with providers to secure alternative shelter-in-place locations. 24 hours notice does not give resource-limited community-based organizations sufficient time to render aid. 24 hours notice does not acknowledge the lack of support available on a weekend, even in our larger municipalities. Evicting people living under extraordinarily difficult circumstances with only one day's notice in the middle of a pandemic is disproportionate to the severity of the crime committed and in fact has profound ramifications for a person experiencing homelessness individual's health.

The second way house bill 3124 reduces unintended harm is by allowing individuals an opportunity to recover their possessions, which may include medications, clothing, and important documents. Having nothing and nowhere to go considerably lengthens the duration of time a person will spend literally homeless. People need a secure space to sleep and store possessions to have the best chance at meaningfully participating in the economy.

There is still considerable stigma and discrimination around mental health and poverty in our community. Homelessness is the most visible manifestation of this prejudice and the treatment against those who are homeless and Black or Latinx is far worse. House Bill 3124 will not fix this but it will reduce unintended harmful consequences while we work together to develop housing at the scope and scale this state of housing and homelessness emergency requires. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation.