

Dear House Committee on Human Services,

I just finished cleaning up human excrement from the sidewalk at the entrance of my building this morning. Last week I had to spend money to replace a broken window. I frequently clean up trash, human waste, and needles from my homeless neighbors. This is a GROWING problem.

I then receive an e-mail alerting me to HB4079. I discover that the Oregon Legislature is considering an additional tax to "help" the homeless. This is yet another misguided government attempt to throw money at a problem. I do not understand how taking money from one group of responsible people and then giving it to irresponsible people will solve the homeless problem. There is no accountability for your idea of giving \$750 vouchers to the less fortunate. I have studied the homeless problem in detail. I work in Salem. The Union Gospel Mission has a new wonderful facility in downtown Salem. The facility has open beds for people that are willing to work themselves out of their situation. The problem is many homeless people will not agree to abide by the rules at the facility. For this reason, beds are empty and people do not help themselves. Meanwhile, there is squalor and filth across the block as a large number of homeless people are subsidized by city, county, and non-profit organizations. Any direct aid to the homeless is simply a subsidy that enables them to continue a destructive lifestyle.

Homeless people have an opportunity to help themselves with Union Gospel-like programs. If they do not choose help through those programs, they should not receive subsidies. Society can no longer subsidize their destructive lifestyles. Many of these people need help. The only path I see to correct the problem is incarcerating and institutionalizing people who are not helping themselves. This sounds harsh, but it is the most humane way to better the lives of chronically homeless people.

Please do not increase taxes or subsidize irresponsible behavior. I do NOT support HB 4079. Please kill this bill.

Sincerely,

Phillip H. Gerstner