



March 21, 2023

RE: Letter of Support for Limited Liability for Rural Communities

To Whom It May Concern:

Just like most areas in the state, Douglas County is struggling with the houseless population. However, unlike larger metropolitan cities, rural communities don't have the same access to funding from state or federal levels. Nor do we have the tax base that the metropolitan areas have.

That being said, the houseless crisis in Douglas County is severe and impacts all of us. The houseless are camping in our parks, riverbanks, sidewalks, anywhere they can find a spot impacting families, recreation, tourism, and business owners. There comes a point the police have no other option but to sweep the camps forcing the houseless to have to start all over again...rinse and repeat. Often times they will seek out places that are less conspicuous and where emergency personnel struggle to locate them should they need assistance.

One tool that would offer assistance would be the establishment of safe resting places or urban campgrounds. Unfortunately, one of the biggest barriers to establishing such sites is the inability of rural areas to withstand the legal challenges associated with offering designated areas so the houseless can find refuge.

-5 to SB 847 seeks to address these barriers by limiting liability to rural communities that establish such sites. It doesn't set a low bar for these designated sites, but requires minimum standards including:

- Reliable and minimum space for the homeless to rest, erect a tent and keep their belongings;
- Provide basic amenities including access to clean water, sanitary services, and trash removal;
- Provides better access to emergency services.

As an advocate for -5, I have talked to many folks with interests in the homeless crisis and I currently sit on the local Homeless Commission through the City of Roseburg and am the CEO of Umpqua Community Health Center. Please support the -5 amendment so we can start giving our people the assistance they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KC Bolton', written over a horizontal line.

KC Bolton, Chief Executive Officer

Aviva Health (Umpqua Community Health Center)

Hope. Health. Life.