

Submitter: Adam Barnes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Hope this finds you well, and thank you for taking the time to read this.

Homelessness is a complex issue with myriad contributing elements. Most Oregonians have had a personal experience with our current housing crisis, as have I.

During the pandemic, the bike shop down our block closed down due to financial hardship. A fence was erected around the parking lot to help secure the building. Initially, a few campers arrived-- they were peaceful, quiet, and respectful of the property. But after a while, more and more transient persons moved in, transforming our block into a giant, 80+ person encampment. Within the encampment were several repeat criminals, one of whom ran a bike chop-shop and paid other occupants to steal bikes and bike parts. My neighbor's 3 bikes were stolen off the back of her car as she and her family loaded up for a trip. When she asked at the encampment, they denied any involvement, though she could see her bikes in one of the tents.

This attracted other illicit activities, including drug dealers dropping by in broad daylight, people shooting up and smoking fentanyl on the sidewalks they were obstructing, defecating and vomiting on the sidewalks, smash-and-grabs of local renters' cars. This is less than a block from a public school. I once saw a man steal my neighbor's Honda. I asked him what he was doing and he threatened me with a knife and stole the car. The car was recovered two days later, full of drug paraphernalia and with mechanical damage.

I have so many personal experiences, I can't bother to type them all out. What we are doing to our unhoused populace is subhuman. These are people with social, developmental, psychiatric, drug dependency, and physical disabilities. This bill does not protect them, as it attests. We would not hand a person with Downs Syndrome or ALS a blanket and a tent and force them to sleep on a sidewalk. I would never expect a person in their position to be able to provide necessary self-care, and doing so is cruel.

We live in one of the most-taxed areas in the US. We citizens bear the burden of funding ineffective programs while tolerating the damage, filth, crime, and social demoralization that results. It is insulting.

These folks need treatment, period. They will not seek it. They cannot be expected to

right their course on their own, and forcing them through the struggle of doing so is beyond cruelty.

Kindly,

Adam B.