

I oppose this deeply flawed proposal and urge the Committee to permanently shelve the right-to-rest concept. The last thing Oregon needs is another piece of utopian legislation that ends up delivering dystopian outcomes.

- HB3501 checks the utopian box by granting homeless individuals the right to camp in public spaces for as long as they wish. By also allowing them to sue for harassment, the bill could bring the state's strained judicial system to a standstill, opening the door to dystopian outcomes, including vigilantism.
- Enacting right-to-rest legislation almost certainly would transform our world-class parks and natural areas into replicas of the trash-strewn encampments now dotting Portland's sidewalks and highway shoulders.

Equally troubling: HB3501 rests on the dubious claim that high housing costs and other economic hardships are forcing numerous Oregonians onto the streets. Although high rents are constraining family discretionary spending and adding to housing insecurity, there is little evidence housing costs are responsible for the growth in Oregon's unsheltered population—the focus of the right-to-rest initiative.

Indeed, migration data from Multnomah County's Point-in-Time (PIT) counts strongly suggest the unsheltered homeless crisis in Oregon's most populous county is largely an imported one.

- Data from consecutive PIT counts typically show the number of unsheltered individuals who moved to the county while homeless exceeding the rise in the county's total unsheltered population.
- The 2011 PIT report, which was the first to feature migration data and also introduced the simple calculation described above, noted that in-migration "could theoretically account for the entire increase in unsheltered numbers between the 2009 and 2011 counts." Most subsequent PIT counts have yielded similar results, which are presented at the end of this testimony.

It is hard to deny the role lenient homeless policies have played in the in-migration of homeless individuals documented in the PIT counts. It is equally hard to ignore the predatory behavior and human suffering accompanying the simultaneous rise in our county's unsheltered population. A change in our homeless policies, including a firm rejection of the right-to-rest concept, is long overdue. If Committee members disagree, they should push for a multi-year right-to-rest pilot project to prove the skeptics wrong

Year of Multnomah County (MC) PIT Count	Number of MC residents counted as unsheltered who were homeless when they arrived in MC after the previous PIT Count was conducted	Is the number in the previous column greater than the increase in MC's unsheltered population during the same timeframe?
2011	195 already homeless individuals moved to MC between 2009 and 2011.	YES; the in-migration of 195 people exceeded the 127 person increase in MC's unsheltered tally.
2013	383	YES, 383 is bigger than the concurrent 177 person uptick in MC's unsheltered population.
2015	224	YES; this increase meets the criterion since MC's unsheltered tally fell by 8 individuals.
2017	Not given; PIT noted 285 of those counted as unsheltered had moved to MC in last 2 years but did not specify how many were homeless when they arrived.	YES, since some fraction of the 285 no doubt were homeless when they arrived. Any positive number would have eclipsed the 219 person decline in the unsheltered population.
2019	290	PARTIALLY; 290 amounts to about two-thirds of the unsheltered population increase of 369
2022.	COVID-related data shortcomings make it impossible to credibly calculate the relevant numbers. The PIT totals relied heavily on estimates, for example, and migration questions did not use the relevant 3-year timeframe.	