

Submitter: Max Evans

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

To our representatives in Salem,

I have lived in Portland for more than half of my life. A city that was once a bastion of greenery and free expression has devolved into a laissez faire free-for-all that leaves working-class Oregonians to deal with any and all consequences of unfettered public "camping": drug use, vandalism, theft, ecological hazards, psychological distress, and violence. The causation between these issues and unfettered camping in public spaces is undeniable and needs zero explanation at this time. At every turn, our leadership has chosen to enable and incentivize drug users and mentally ill people to reject institutional help and continue to encroach and pollute our treasured parks, neighborhoods, commercial hubs, and local ecology. Cars, trailers, and RVs that are in no condition to be on the road continue to leak biohazards and toxic chemicals into our watersheds, parks, and walkways. Disabled Oregonians are forced to navigate blocked sidewalks. Local businesses are being crushed by higher insurance premiums, if they aren't being denied coverage outright. This is not a sustainable course to continue.

Every day when I walk to work, I see illegal fires damaging highway overpass supports on 405. I have found live ammunition on the ground in front of these same camps. I cannot leave my window open overnight, because I will be woken up to the screams of a person in crisis (or worse.) As a property manager, I clean up feces, needles, narcotics, and remains from fires on a weekly basis. Just as frequently, my tenants explain to me why they are leaving Portland and our grievances are identical. I have lost an incalculable amount of business due to the uncontrolled camps just over our fence, to say nothing of the man hours spent on cleaning up after them. I spoke to two people about this very bill today, and both of them expressed immediate outrage and forwarded this testimony submission form out to multiple others.

Above all, leaving human beings to rot in the street is the antithesis of a humane response. Our homeless population is living in abject squalor and subject to pestilence, exposure to the elements, vulnerability to violence, and routine exposure to hazardous waste and noxious fumes. No person should be encouraged or enabled to live in such a state. The current narcotics market is flooded with the most dangerous drugs any of us have seen in our lifetime. The neurological effects of modern methamphetamine will leave a person in a state of psychosis for months before it can even be determined if the damage is permanent. Fentanyl is now being sold mixed with Xylazine, a powerful animal tranquilizer that cannot be counteracted with Narcan. People experiencing addiction to these substances are fundamentally

mentally unfit to make the right choices for their wellbeing, and it is nothing but cruel to leave them in the street to make those choices.

We are setting ourselves up for calamity. Whether it be from a fire that gets out of control, a loss of economic opportunity that puts even more Oregonians at risk of losing housing and shrinking the tax base, a decay of our public services that leaves people helpless when they need it most, or a divided and chaotic political landscape that upends the leadership of our state.

Do right by your state, your taxpayers, and our most vulnerable. Vote NO.