

Submitter: Robert Drake

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Dear Legislature,

I have been a resident of Gresham, OR for over thirty-three years. The first twenty years I lived in Oregon it was a state I was proud to live in. The last roughly ten years, I have witnessed the once thriving, beautiful, and functional area I lived in be utterly turned on its head. The Portland area today is NOT the area I grew up in, it has been allowed by poor policy and a general lack of common sense leadership to devolve into an unsafe place to live, rife with crime, trash, graffiti, homelessness, street racing, and drugs. A place where the hard working and tax paying citizens feel spat upon in favor of those who wish to live on the fringes of society. Are you aware that for the last two years the Oregon population has shrunk? Are you aware that tax paying citizens are sick and tired of watching a once beautiful area continually be degraded by unsafe homeless encampments and drug dens? And now Oregon lawmakers are seriously entertaining the idea of enshrining lawless homeless encampments and paying for drug addiction? You cannot be serious.

The continuation of the degradation of Oregon and the Portland area by enshrining street "camping" and paying individuals to be homeless is beyond wreckless. It is an absolute WASTE of tax payer funds. These kind of bills ignore the reality that many of the homeless individuals on the streets choose to live this way, and the laws in Oregon have encouraged roughly 1/3 of the current homeless population to move here from out of state. The State of Oregon (and particularly Portland) has encouraged homelessness and drug addiction by legalizing street camping and the decriminalization of drugs. I have news for you, it is not working!

Of course there should be services for the homeless and the mentally ill who SEEK those services. The reality is that many of the individuals who currently are homeless in this area DO NOT WANT HELP. They want to continue to be enabled to live a drug addicted life on the fringes of society at the complete expense of the hard working, law abiding, tax paying citizens.

What happens when enough of the tax base moves because they no longer can stand being taking advantage of? I have considered moving myself and I still might. I have been a tax paying citizen for over twenty years, and I am sick to death of the state of my area and of the policy in the State of Oregon.

The answer is not to simply legalize and decriminalize all forms of societal ills. This is a cop out and a fantasy. This idea only ignores the issue of homelessness and

drug addiction. It is not the solution.

The State of Oregon MUST go in a functional direction. Too long has there been an open display of dysfunctional government, spending, and a general disregard for the law. Oregon needs to:

1. Increase and fund the police. Let them do their jobs.
2. BAN STREET CAMPING.
3. Re-criminalize drugs
4. STOP squandering tax payer funds on useless societal experiments that do not work. For example, spending millions of dollars on mini-homes for the homeless. There are statistics that only around 1% of the homeless population in the Portland area moved into these homes and the average stay of that 1% was two weeks. As I stated previously many of these people DO NOT WANT HELP! Many moved here to be homeless because of the free for all that's going on. This is not what is needed for Oregon.
5. Use tax payer dollars wisely toward programs for those who actually want help, for cleaning up our streets, for supporting the police to get drugs, crime, and homelessness off our streets.
6. Enforce the law and do what works.

Let's get back to common sense and making laws that make sense. In short, let's see Oregon go back to what it was fifteen years ago before all this insanity began.

Thank you