

Submitter: Elizabeth McClendon

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

As a property-tax-paying resident of Portland, I am wholly opposed to this Bill in any form. Perhaps a title change to "Right to Ruin" should be considered. The homeless have taken over Portland, and are turning it into a combination open air drug market, garbage dump, and money pit. The city, county, and state continue to ENABLE this group of people – even though as a group, they in no way contribute to the community. On the contrary, they are bleeding ordinary homeowners dry - literally and figuratively. We live in North Portland, where we needn't go more than a block to experience broken down RVs, cars, tents, and never-ending piles of garbage. Now, this Bill is attempting to make it EASIER for them to set up camps, AND to be able to sue if anyone attempts to remove their precious garbage! It will make the problem worse. Oregon in general and Portland in particular are already meccas for homeless drug users exactly because we make it so very, very easy for them to live on our streets, get an endless stream of free stuff, and use drugs 24/7 without any consequences. They have zero skin in the game. It is all TAKE with nothing in return. I am a native Oregonian, born in Corvallis and have lived in Portland since 1985. I no longer recognize my beautiful city, and yet I am asked to pay higher and higher taxes to support the deterioration of livability. We are already losing businesses from all corners of the city, and I personally know of many, many long time residents who are leaving. Myself and my extended family members have discussed that possibility so often over the past years. Something like this Bill taking effect, could indeed be what pushes us over the edge. Why is all the energy, all the money, all the attention given to this group of people who have NO intention of changing in any way. We know this since there are already shelter beds going empty; campers given the opportunity to move into shelters simply refuse since they would have to agree to not do drugs, to submit to mental health counseling, or any other myriad of excuses that might endanger their everything-for-free-and-no-consequences lifestyle. Stop enabling them! Do not let this Bill proceed. I'm tired of being afraid to walk around the beautiful city park in my neighborhood after dark. I'm tired of being surprised and relieved to wake up in the morning and see that my car hasn't been stolen or vandalized. I'm tired of tents and garbage on every speck of green space. I'm tired of the fires, the break-ins, the illegal vehicles clogging the streets. You spend SO MUCH money on people who do not give anything back; meanwhile, ordinary workers and homeowners are forced to support this craziness with taxes that are some of the highest in the nation. Since the city, county, and state seem intent on ruining the livability and value of our homes and lifestyles, could I please have a refund on my property taxes? Living through this over the last few years has sucked every drop of empathy from me. It's gone - all gone. Are there heart-wrenching stories that exist? Probably. But the VAST majority of these people are not willing to work or contribute

in any way. One recent example: I was at my local North Portland Fred Meyer a few weeks back. There was an elderly man – probably at least mid-seventies – working - bagging groceries. I was stunned he still needed to work that hard, and yet also impressed he had found a way to support himself and contribute to his neighborhood. As I exited the store, there was a drugged-out, 20-something, white guy outside the door asking me for money. WHAT is wrong with that picture? No. Not this Bill. Never. No more!