

Submitter: Kevin Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I work locally, grew up here, spend most of my time in Portland and have family living here. I love Oregon and am proud to be from here, but this bill is a step in the wrong direction. We cannot misconstrue compassion with enabling. This state needs to be better at connecting folks with services and having DESIGNATED CAMPING areas for the houseless. Allowing people to just camp wherever and deteriorate isn't humane at all. In addition, the non-houseless people here also deserve to live in an environment that is respected, clean and safe. Public spaces are for everyone, but if camping is allowed anywhere, it is no longer shared, as these individuals behave like they own it and threaten violence to people who pass by. By not having DESIGNATED areas for tent or RV habitation, it is dangerous and unsafe as we see with people being too close to the roads or living with propane tanks in their tents (massive fire risk). As we have very frequent fires under overpasses and bridges, this legislature should also take concern of the damage to structural integrity this causes. There is a humane and compassionate way to help those who are houseless, but allowing camping everywhere is not a solution, it is enabling and kicking the can down the road while stating to residents here that their concerns don't matter. Please, I implore you to draft a better bill with more forethought, and at least try to designate safe locations for folks to camp and park their RV's. This is a beautiful state and allowing this bill to pass will create environmental devastation to our parks, green spaces, forests and most likely bridges/ overpasses.

I want to see Oregon be a leader in addressing homelessness, addiction and mental health, but this would be a fail.