

Submitter: Kurt Neugebauer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I own a condo at 720 NW Naito Parkway. I am unable to safely walk into downtown with all the tents, filth (including human feces), needles, and now the aggressive harassment. I'm a strong 63 year old gay male, and this past year, for the first time fear for my life trying to walk to get groceries.

Last month passing a houseless woman talking to another I overheard, "that b-tch social worker thinks she can make me get off the street, we own the streets! We get free food, tents, and our connections—f—ck her!"

Portland has created living on the street as a lifestyle. And every week I see notices in my FB condo group about car theft and damage, porch theft, and attempts to break and enter. It's the worst I've ever experienced.

Where's the messaging that this is not an acceptable lifestyle in society? Simply providing housing will not help—that will encourage a warm place to bring in other squatters to use drugs. There is not one houseless person in my neighborhood I'd feel safe with as a neighbor.

First: camping on taxpayers public sidewalks and property needs to be illegal and not allowed, as in other developed countries and some US cities.

Second: Intake centers and relocation compounds that provide assessment of mental health issues, options for addiction help, teaches basic life skills and personal grooming, opportunities to participate in scheduled productive activities until appropriate placement back in regular society—such as learning gardening, therapeutic art, making food for others in a common kitchen, group therapy, provide showers and facilities. Perhaps work with local architects for the creation of value engineered, yet aesthetically sound facilities. And please locate these compounds on the outskirts of city proper—with all the necessary resources to rehabilitate. Not where the most vibrant and interesting areas with overdue restoration of historical places and buildings are (Chinatown/Old Town).

Third: Support teams of 4-5 persons that include mental health specialists and compassionate enforcement officers (trained as global citizens) to patrol area "beats." Message would get out real quick with consistent and compassionate patrolling that there is help and it is not optional to stay living on the street and sidewalks in tents.

Forth: Messaging public health campaign like distributed flyers, reserving an

advertising section in each public transit car (I saw this in Australia) reinforcing that being homeless is not an option and there is proactive and viable help at the “communal compounds” to get you on the road to becoming well and productive in society again.

Fifth: Placement services and affordable housing options for those able and ready to get work and education to re-enter society.

It's not rocket science to take care of these problems, but it is multifaceted and necessary to be wholistic with approach and planning. And firm about what is not acceptable, preventing the demise and quality of life of other law-abiding tax paying citizens.