

Submitter: Gloria Thomas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Downtown Medford and the surrounding areas are what attracts tourists to Medford. When you walk past people sleeping in the park with garbage all around them, garbage from free food that is provided to them but they cannot throw the containers or leftovers in garbage cans; when you are sitting inside a storefront and a homeless person urinates on the window; when you try to go into a business to help the local economy and you have someone sleeping in the doorway; when you are walking your dog or with children and you see drug paraphernalia all around..... what impression do you think the tourists get?

We operate a bed and breakfast in a historic district right next to Downtown and we have signed a contract with two international tour operators and we are scared that they will encounter these scenarios during their stay. What do you think they will do when they go back to their country.... tell others not to visit due to the garbage, drugs, etc, etc, etc. How are businesses going to continue to operate in our small town if we continue to encounter these scenarios. We will most likely need to close our business if we cannot get tourists to stay here.

What is worse is that we the taxpayers cannot even use the public spaces that this bill is attempting to decriminalize... We would love to walk along the Bear Creek Greenway, which was one of the reasons that we purchased our home, and we do not feel safe doing so. Do you think that I suggest to our customers to walk along Main St?

Why does the local government continue to spend money fixing and repaving roads that do not need fixing? Why aren't those funds allocated to purchase abandoned buildings and convert them to affordable housing and /or shelters? Why don't they hire the unsheltered that are willing to work to get ahead to help rebuild or maintain shelters and/or housing? Why don't they use the funds to allocate services for the mentally ill or addicts?

I strongly oppose this bill as it will only cause more and more homeless and unsheltered to use our public spaces without any concern for the residents that are paying their taxes and working hard.