

Submitter: Tyrone Brown

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I am a self-made entrepreneur, single father, and proud African-American resident of Aloha, Oregon. I am writing to you today to express my concerns regarding the proposed bill to decriminalize public camping in our state.

First, I want to acknowledge that homelessness is a complex issue that demands our empathy and understanding. As someone who has faced adversity and overcome significant challenges in life, I believe in the importance of providing support and resources to those in need. However, I am deeply concerned that decriminalizing public camping will exacerbate the already distressing homeless and drug problem in Aloha and surrounding communities.

As a single father, my top priority is ensuring the safety and well-being of my child. The presence of homeless encampments in our parks, sidewalks, and public spaces not only poses a threat to the physical safety of residents but also has a significant impact on the mental health and overall quality of life in our community. Drug use and criminal activity are often prevalent in these encampments, and children who are exposed to these behaviors can be left with long-lasting trauma.

As a minority entrepreneur, I have invested my time, effort, and resources into building a successful business in Aloha. The presence of homeless encampments discourages patronage and undermines the economic growth and revitalization efforts our community has worked so hard to achieve. A thriving business community is essential for creating job opportunities and stimulating economic development, which are crucial factors in addressing homelessness and poverty.

Instead of decriminalizing public camping, I implore you to consider alternative solutions that will address the root causes of homelessness and substance abuse in our state. These solutions might include increasing funding for mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and affordable housing initiatives, as well as creating innovative job training and placement programs.

In conclusion, while I understand the intention behind the proposed bill is to provide relief to homeless individuals, I strongly believe that it will have unintended consequences that will negatively impact the residents of Aloha, Oregon. I urge you to carefully consider the implications of this bill and explore alternative solutions to create lasting, positive change for our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.