

To the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness  
Salem, Oregon

The volume of stupid ideas coming from Salem is no longer a surprise.

The lack of compassion and the proliferation of blight attendant in homeless tent camping have created enormous problems in Portland and throughout Oregon. Taxpaying citizens rightly are complaining louder and more frequently that the millions upon millions of dollars taken by government to solve the problem have visibly only made it worse. Tents and tarps are anything but a solution.

Here comes HB 3501 to double-down on the destructive enabling behavior.

This bill provides a so-called right for one class of citizen at the expense of all the rest. It codifies poor societal behavior, the taking of public spaces from those who should be able to use them and giving it to those who should be focussed on escaping that dismal situation.

Tent encampments and their surroundings are unsafe environments, given the needles, the biohazards, the fire danger and often criminal elements. Unsafe for the occupants and unsafe for those who have to be near them. Make no mistake, there are those who prefer living in tents: they are those who can't function in society due to mental illness, drug dependency (both issues which are long past due being taken seriously by this state) and those whose life choice includes that type of estrangement from productivity.

That the bill includes references to the property of those in tents is further evidence of the author's naïveté, since often the property is that owned by others (including, in the case of city-furnished tents by feckless city leaders, the taxpayers).

Homelessness has been called an emergency by politicians. Rather than treat the emergency by treating the causes, this bill and its author want to make it worse.

This bill should be killed. Vote No.

Sincerely,  
Mark Booth