

Submitter: Cary Hagan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

The purpose of the public common space within a modern city has never been for permanent occupation. It is there to facilitate commerce and better living of the individuals who live there (and frankly, provide the funding for those public spaces through taxes). Permanent camps in these spaces not only creates unsanitary conditions for the inhabitants and general public, it also hampers the ability for these essential areas to work as intended. Billions have been invested in the public infrastructure of the Portland metro area. Those improvements were financed with the expectation that the benefits they provide would be paid back in kind through increased economic activity and, therefore, taxes. By allowing these investments to serve as essentially campgrounds for the homeless, they can no longer provide their intended benefits. The new right to rest bill will harm businesses and decrease pedestrian traffic in critical commerce areas. The economic harm caused will not only negate previous investments of tax dollars, but also reduce taxable revenue for local businesses. This leaves less funds for the up keep of public areas, which would be needed doubly so due to the unsanitary conditions caused by homeless camps. The homeless problem undoubtedly needs a solution, and that solution will require money. We need to be doing everything we can to raise taxable revenues, not make it harder for businesses and tourism to function.