

Submitter: Sharon Dallas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I have lived in Beaverton for almost 40 years and have paid increasing taxes to keep the community green and safe. I now have small grandchildren that also live here. Both of our households border THPRD Parks, so paying the increasing taxes to maintain and expand these parks has been, while a financial hardship, fairly 'worth it' as we have seen wildlife expansion and have safe, lovely places for families to enjoy. Mind you, the space behind our home is heavily wooded with a creek. We had a few tents back there when the city owned the property (we once dismantled a tent that had 5 gallon tank of gasoline in it) but THPRD has been able to maintain a 'no overnight' policy in the park (sanitation with the creek, fire hazard), and certainly wouldn't allow for encampments. I would feel very unsafe if people were living back there, not only from a drugs/crime standpoint, but from a fire hazard standpoint. If that 40 acres burned up so would many homes bordering the park. That is not a safe situation for those camping in parks or the neighboring residents. Proponents are calling this bill "Right to Rest Act" and I can tell you that not limiting where and how these camps operate will add to many resident's unrest. People will be able to hide anywhere in vast areas and not receive the help they need to overcome mental illnesses and/or drug addiction. Surely there is a better option than this illogical solution.

I am VERY concerned about HB 3501, and what that means to our safety of not just the streets in front of our homes, but the vast THPRD network that we have all built in our community. The whole country is watching Oregon with utter disbelief that we would consider a sweeping bill such as HB 3501 that has no exceptions to 'public space' even where parks, schools, or neighborhoods are concerned.

I cannot state in words the extent to which I OPPOSE this bill.

I have some experience with homelessness and mental illness. My sister is schizophrenic and at one point thought she was in danger in my parents home (paranoid schizophrenia)- my parents are the most kind people I have ever known. She left the home and lived in her car (in a very cold climate) and refused to eat as she thought she would be poisoned. Only after a year when she became so starved, down to 80 pounds, could my parents do anything to help her. They had to watch as the police picked her up and took her to a facility for evaluation. She got on medication, placed in an apartment semi-supervised for meds and that was 40 years ago. She has struggles but has not relapsed. It was beyond unfortunate it took her almost dying to get her help. We were told a person has to be a danger to themselves or others to mandate evaluation. So I get the difficulty and maybe one angle would be to change the threshold for family or friends to seek treatment for

their loved one. Also there is a contingent of mentally ill that cannot co-exist in public while keeping the public or themselves safe, so hospitals or group homes for these people are needed.

I also know drug addicted people that won't get help before hitting rock bottom. If we as a community enable the addiction through legalizing drugs and providing everything they need to stay hooked, we are complicit in an injustice to them as people. If we allow them to congregate and give them needles and everything else they need, why would they ever feel the need to change. If they know they cannot be arrested or punished in any way for illegal activity why would they do otherwise? I've seen north Portland and even during the day it's like an episode of Breaking Bad. Is this what we want in Beaverton and our other communities? It is just unbelievable what some of you think is the solution, and I adamantly oppose this bill for all kinds of reasons, but the primary one is that it lacks common sense and feel it does a disservice to the people that need out of that situation, and a disservice to the community at large.