

Submitter: Laura Fricke

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I'm imploring the legislature to oppose HB3105. I live near a park that has had homeless camping. It is violent, it is dangerous. A park, where just 10 years ago, I hosted my son's 3rd birthday party at the playground/picnic tables, but is now surrounded by tents. It is inconceivable to have that party today. There are needles, public nudity/defecating, dogs off leash that are vicious. To approach any of the campers, is to risk your life. This is also a public health emergency for both for the residents living near unsanctioned camping and the campers themselves. There are no facilities to bathe or clean clothes, clean food, etc. The three restrooms at our local park cannot handle the 30+campers that are there on a given day. I want to be able to walk safely down my city's sidewalks without worrying if I'll get screamed at, have food thrown on me, or encounter a dog that is out of the owner's control from the tents on the parking strip. I do not simply say NIMBY. I propose that, if homelessness should continue to increase in Oregon cities, that cities must designate a specific "City Camp". A place where one can live outside, have a designated safe locker for valuables, access to bathroom and shower, laundry facilities. I think these "Camps" can be located in areas where there is empty/undeveloped land or abandoned locations. A community can be built around this camp. A health center can be there, where medical professionals are required to perform "pro-bono" work (even just one day a year!) There could be incentives for them to work there. A counseling/mental health center along with a security center-I hesitate to use police and have uniforms, but some entity that can uphold law enforcement at the camp. A lower priced grocery, gas station (compared to the heart of the city) can be available with opportunities for the residents themselves to be employed. A small library/community center can provide internet access, job placement and group spaces for activities if campers want to socialize outside of their tent/RV. A free shuttle can leave twice a day (and return) to locations in the city for campers that want to work away from the camp. My intent is not to ostracize campers from their city, but to create a place, that is simply, where one goes if they have to live outside due to their circumstances. It also can be a stepping stone to moving into permanent indoor housing. Camping in our cities should be treated as camping in our State and National Parks: designated spots, not "wherever I want". Our Park systems would be destroyed if laws were not in place prohibiting humans to camp 'anywhere'. This will happen to our city if HB3501 passes. We need real solutions not just relaxing all rules until we figure it out. If we want to maintain our public outdoor spaces and have them accessible for ALL city residents, we should oppose HB3501. As written, HB3501 is inequitable to all city residents and gives power to the camper to occupy public spaces for indefinite amounts of time with no thought to public health, sanitation and safety. Thank you

