

Submitter: Adrienne Kringen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3501, the “Oregon Right to Rest” bill. While I am sure that the sponsors of this bill are motivated by compassion, the outcomes of this action are likely to produce the opposite effect.

HB 3501 will result major safety and health issues for everyone, creating more friction and increased conflict between the unhoused community and residents and businesses, not less. Promising overlapping and conflicting rights to the same spaces will simply promote conflict.

HB 3501 will not result in any improvement to the lives of folks experiencing houselessness. Quite the opposite. We know that folks experiencing houselessness often need outreach and assistance accessing resources and finding safety, security and stability. Camping in public spaces leaves houseless folks the most vulnerable to traffickers, drug dealers and other bad actors. Our goal should be to help folks get out of crisis. In addition to increasing housing (both short-term and long-term housing, low-barrier and even no-barrier), providing resources that will actually help folks (medical support, mental health support, job training, addiction recovery, etc.) should be our goal. This bill which would condone long-term street camping on our sidewalks, in parks, near libraries, schools and highways. That should NOT be our end goal. We can and must do better for all our citizens.

Finally, this bill will further galvanize many Oregonians who are compassionate folks but are exhausted and frustrated by the seemingly intractable homelessness problem. Oregonians of every political stripe — progressive, conservative, libertarian and independent — will see this bill as a signal that our state government has not only failed, but in fact accepted defeat. Again, we can and we must do better.