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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I live three blocks from a large unsanctioned camp that became established between 2020 and 2021. Since then it has only gotten worse. The desperation of the people "living" there is palpable. It is inhumane, a tragedy, and a condition we should be all be utterly ashamed of. It is no way for anyone to exist in a civilized society. It is the manifestation of the failure of social policy. No one wants that kind of "freedom", nor the "right" to live like that. Indeed that kind of "freedom", to live in squalor, heavily addicted, and totally vulnerable, is unsustainable in a functional society. It is the very definition of "rock bottom". Why would our elected leaders want this to continue, as if it's some kind of triumph of personal rights? Shame on this legislature for not addressing the real problems of our state. These people need help. They need actual housing of the same standard you enjoy. They need help to get off drugs and stay off of them. They need a way to make a living or at least play a contributory role in society so they can feel a sense of belonging. We need to have laws that protect them and the greater public from opportunistic criminals preying on all of us in the form of drug dealing, human trafficking, gun dealing, car theft, home burglaries, catalytic converter theft, gang violence, and rape. Camps are essentially concentrated markets for these criminals. Why do you think serving vulnerable people up on a platter to organized crime is going to help anyone, much less the very people you hope to empower?? And what about children and teenagers? This camp near my house is a few blocks from the high school. The camp draws the criminals like moths to a flame and the kids are nearby and easy targets. Shootings were unheard of here, and now they happen all too frequently. We don't go out at night. Everything we own is locked up and brought in. My vehicle was stolen. I see more people stoned out of their minds on Meth and Heroin than I see neighbors walking now. Kids aren't allowed in the park unsupervised and definitely not after dark. Yet before the camp, none of those conditions existed. The list is too long to go down as to the harms we have personally suffered because of the camps and associated crime. I'm exhausted. None of my friends and relatives understand why I stay in Portland. I guess it's because I've been here 26 years and I put my sweat equity into building a strong community, a livable city, and a place where, until very recently, I was thrilled about raising my child. The camps are not the problem. The elected leaders are. Get some vision for helping people to become cared for the way you would want your parents or kids cared for if they were at rock bottom. Would you hand them a tent, a portable toilet and a box of syringes and say, good luck! More power to ya, mom! It's your right! Further, it's time the leadership recognizes the rest of us, and the toll your ill-conceived "solutions" and inaction have had on everything we have built Oregon to be. What effect would this legislation have on kids? They are our future, and this bill puts them directly at risk. Shame on you for proposing this

legislation. Get out on the street and talk to the people living with these camps and the unchecked criminality that they foster. Get back to the drawing board and get to work on REAL SOLUTIONS.