

Submitter: Ken Blancher

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Hello,

This is a letter from a concerned Portland resident that is very concerned about the livability and direction of the city.

First, the public places of the city have been created and funded by taxpayers of the city. They are created for everyone in the community to enjoy and share together. These are important places to build civic pride and members of the community to bind with each other and enjoy life. They're not pieces of land for "first come, first serve" of anyone to claim.

Second, the humanitarian conditions of the camps are horrible. It creates spots of the city with sanitary issues, incredible fire risk (40% of fire calls were for homeless camps in the last year), and high rates of bodily crime (murder, assault, domestic violence etc.).

Third, the psychology of city residents changes with unchecked homeless camps across public spaces. People become afraid for their own safety when going near homeless camps. They avoid them and no longer go to that part of the city. Then decay sets in to surrounding area of the a camp. Housed residents near the camp get out if they can and businesses suffer (or close).

Lastly, I'm not a social worker or a psychologist, but I really feel that giving homeless individuals an option to live in a tent "with no rules or structure for re-integration into society" is not putting them on the road to recovery. It's enabling them to stay in the rut they're in. I frequently hear (in media) the excuse that shelters have too many rules, so they would rather sleep in a tent. I think the outreach component of getting folks into shelters is where the improvement needs to happen. Not camping legal changes to enable homeless folks to live off the grid and skirt the systems to recover and re-integrate them into society.

Thank you,  
Ken Blancher