

Submitter: Cindy Rieves

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

As a resident of Oregon, I am fully opposed to this bill. It incentivizes the homeless to further intimidate, harass, and now financially punish everyone who is responsible for the care of their business and or property.

This bill does absolutely nothing to protect the rights of citizens who obey the law. By allowing the homeless to claim that they are being unduly treated for their poor behavior, open drug use, defecating and urinating in public, harassment, belligerence, and open hostility to anyone who attempts to induce them to remove themselves and their belongings from the legal premises of legitimate business and property owners, it perpetuates more of the same.

For someone in the Oregon state legislature to favor punishing people attempting to establish and maintain property so that miscreants, mentally deranged, and in most cases trespassers can set up house without consequences is insane. Whatever happened to the vagrancy laws that were on the books? This bill only emboldens those to take further advantage of these situations. It does not address in the least any steps to preclude continuing behavior of this kind.

At what point will you look at what is really happening to our communities? They are being abandoned by businesses who no longer are willing to keep pouring resources into cleaning up the mess generated by the homeless. With every legitimate business that is forced to close their doors, you impoverish the communities by taking away both employment opportunities and places that customers can shop and find goods and services that are affordable.

The unreasonable burden you are placing on the backs of those who work and contribute to society is unsustainable, and what you will ultimately be left with is a living garbage dump of people unfit to be around. Small wonder we see people living in squalor when it is being given the 'green light' to just do what you want, where you want, and to hell with everyone else.

The fact that drug use has now been legitimized is yet another catalyst for those who want to be sustained by the state and federal government. They use drugs in the open, they have no qualms about who is being exposed to this madness, all the while claiming their rights are being violated. How about the rights of every man, woman, and child who live in those communities being run into the ground? Why aren't we being defended?

Housing units need to be built, and rents that are affordable made available to low income individuals to keep them off the street and safe. People need to be held accountable for their actions and behavior, that is part of living in a civil society, that is why laws are enacted and why they are on the books. It is incumbent on those in office to safeguard the livelihoods of citizens so that they can prosper and be productive, it is not to subsidize those who have opted out of society.

For the vast majority of those who are living on the street, they made choices and decisions that landed them there. While mental health concerns do enter the picture, not everyone is suffering from illnesses associated with that. Tough love is the answer not indulging behavior that is self destructive or encourages more of the same. Clean up our streets, even if that means putting everyone currently living on the fringe of society in facilities that either get them off drugs/alcohol or in jail. Give them the choice of getting their life together, or spending it in prison.

That is the only way that you will reach some people. You don't keep finding ways to forgive poor behavior, you make them become accountable and you don't enact legislation that has been proposed in this bill.