

Submitter: Jennifer Whitley

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Agree with Jeffery Bennett.

HB 3501 (a) runs counter to everything the cities, counties and states publicly purport to be doing to solve the homelessness problems; (b) gives law breakers a legal right to camp on public spaces; (c) provides homeless persons the right to pursue claims against anyone who seeks to remove that person from a public space (even if they're camping there and participating in illegal activities); and (d) essentially provides protected class status to homeless campers camping on public property.

HB 3501 elevates the rights of homeless persons above those of law abiding citizens. If someone erects a camp in a public park next to a neighboring property owner's fence and creates a nuisance (which is already a common story and a terrible situation for many property owners), the property owner could be found in violation of HB 3501 for attempting to diminish, mitigate, prevent or terminate the nuisance. In other words, attempts to protect one's own property could be deemed illegal under HB 3501.

HB 3501 not only legalizes the very camping problems that have plagued Oregon for the past many years, it provides those same campers with the ability to file suits against anyone who allegedly infringes upon those rights. Based upon the structure of the suits and attorney fee rights, the enactment of HB 3501 would trigger a cavalcade of civil lawsuits against law abiding citizens and property owners whilst providing attorneys ample opportunities to pocket large fees at the public's expenses. In summary, HB 3501 encapsulates and legalizes all of the bad attributes of homelessness and illegal camping while causing otherwise innocent persons to incur burdensome losses attributable to the campers' misconduct, damage claims and attorney fees.

Vote "no" on HB 3501.