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On Behalf Of: Rationality
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure: HB3501

Homelessness is not typically a reflection on the individual themselves but a failing of the state in which they live. This bill is one among many ways in which the state is demonstrating its failure to take the issue seriously.

This bill makes a general proposition that it will allow local governments to reutilize funds used by law enforcement in criminalizing the homeless into solving the problem of homelessness itself. This falsely simplifies a multifaceted issue like homelessness into something that can be addressed by local governments in a meaningful way. This issue is not capable of being solved by local governments, mass housing programs, drug treatment facilities and decriminalization, funds for mental health, and a strong social safety net are among many things needed to actually reduce homelessness and this bill makes no effort to tackle these issues. Also, even if this could be handled meaningfully by local governments this bill has no requirements to ensure that they do so with any funds they might save, it could be delegate however the local government sees fit and do nothing at all for homelessness.

Let's humor for moment, the idea that homeless citizens can so easily afford the necessary legal fees to carry out a harassment case against their fellow citizens. The sheer burden of work it will take to process, investigate, hold trial, and complete the necessary bureaucracy is funds that could be more easily spent on addressing the issues that lead to homelessness. This bill would only increase resentment against homeless individuals where that anger more responsibly belongs against our state and federal leaders for allowing the homeless issue to persist. It places the burden on the citizens, pitting them against one another, and diverts it from you our state leadership, shameful scapegoating of the people you serve!

Though there are many more issues in this bill I will end by saying that this will do nothing meaningful to tackle the root cause of homelessness but rather accept it as a necessary result of the failures of our elected leadership. Many of our fellow citizens who are homeless do have jobs, work hard and still struggle to support their families. If a person is homeless and still working full time it is nothing more than the most disgusting failure of the elected leadership. Those who support this bill which only seeks to persist the problem and continue a horrible status quo for all Oregonians deserve nothing less than to be defeated in your future elections so people who truly care about citizens and the issues they face can do the job you clearly fail to do.

With that I stand in full support of our homeless citizens and oppose this bill that

serves only to distract, posture, pit Oregonians against one another, and preserve a failing status quo.