

Submitter: Krista Hale

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter today to provide testimony in opposition of HB3501. The mere proposal of a bill like this is deeply concerning and the consequences will be devastating. My family has lived in Portland for 5 years, and the decline of the city has been so tragic to watch unfold. As a community, we have witnessed firsthand the kind of damage that has been caused by allowing people to live in tents in public spaces. Overwhelming amounts of trash and hazardous waste, open drug use and paraphernalia, rampant crime and theft, all of this has led to dangerous living conditions for everyone, including the unhoused. It is naïve to think that by passing this bill, things will not become exponentially worse in a very short amount of time. I also want to be very clear that I do not oppose this bill because I do not care about those who have become unhoused. I have strong compassion and empathy towards those who have become unhoused. It's deeply tragic to see people struggling as they are. But I see solutions in getting people into housing, instead of encouraging them to live in these dangerous conditions. The culture in Oregon has become one of enabling, instead of a culture of empowering. We're telling people that it's okay to be homeless and provide the means to do so, instead of providing the means to get into clean and safe living conditions. A lot of tax dollars that we as hard-working citizens pay, are going to programs that I believe are changing that culture of enabling and actually trying to help people into housing to have a better quality of life. I feel that we are better suited to allow those programs to continue and hopefully accomplish lowering the amount of unhoused people in Oregon.

HB3501 does not help the unhoused by encouraging them to live in the worst of conditions. Unprotected from the elements, unprotected from crime, unprotected from the traffic they sleep next to, and continuing to leave them without basic human needs. HB3501 does not help the housed citizens of Oregon either. We will simply have to watch our public spaces be overrun by tents and will cease to be able to enjoy the best parts of this state. People have already begun to flee the state of Oregon due to these conditions, and sadly, I plan to move my family as well if this bill is passed. And I know others in our community plan to do the same.

Sincerely,  
Krista Hale