

**Dear HB 3501,**

**How do I hate thee? Let me count the ways.**

Squalor in tents is not the way,  
despite this Bill of naïveté.

Quit enabling, if you will,  
our children's desire for the fentanyl pill,  
which drives them to steal and turn tricks in tents,  
and break the windows of those who pay rent.

Do they not deserve the gifts of legal codes?  
Fire safety, sanitation and heat when it's cold?

Must they arm themselves to avoid rape and theft,  
the victims of crimes, when they are left,  
beneath the law that should protect them and us.  
Yet we invite more addicts to come here by bus,  
to take drugs and camp, wherever they please,  
to terrorize neighbors with stunning ease.

Do you really intend to:

- Repurpose conservation land for slums.
- Accelerate the ongoing business extinction event.
- Change the law of trespass.
- Impose premises liability risk upon public bodies.
- Kill the market value of homes adjacent to tent slums and citywide.
- Ruin more lives of people imprisoned by addiction and left "unharassed" to rot.

## Merrick Testimony, continued

- Provide more markets for drug-selling predators.
- Provide full employment for lawyers:
  - \$1,000 to the alleged victim plus tens of thousands to his or her attorney. People will learn that if they talk shit to housed neighbors and the housed neighbors talk back, they can get some money.
- Keep Oregon the poster child of failed liberal policies to help Republican candidates in swing states.

If my son or daughter were living in a tent, I would WANT someone to hassle them and try to rescue them from their prison of addiction.

Oregon can't wordsmith our way out of this ("*decriminalization of rest*" !?). If the sponsors truly believe the problem is "shortage of safe and affordable housing [and] the ability to obtain gainful employment," then do what we have done before: try jobs programs, including building barracks and paying people for public works as we did with the Civilian Conservation Corps. Help them get clean and sober and develop a work record to build on.

I can't tell you how much I hate this bill and its **normalization of human failure and suffering**.

Oregon alone cannot fix the national and regional problem of drug addiction and poverty. Perhaps Oregon's so-called leaders need to pressure our federal delegation for national responses. Otherwise, businesses will continue to shut and people who can, will move out. For people who can't move, the quality of life will continue to plummet as newcomers are drawn by

- "decriminalized" hard drugs,
- "decriminalized rest" / trespassing, and
- (because of the lack of prosecution) "decriminalized" burglary.

With the greatest respect to those who seek realistic solutions,

*Jeff Merrick*