

Submitter: Aaron Butler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3644

Oregon HB 3644, a \$217M statewide homeless shelter plan, promises aid but reeks of the state's chronic financial mismanagement. History shows centralized schemes falter under vague oversight—look at the 1930s WPA, where 20% of funds vanished to corruption, or Oregon's 1970s Community Action Agencies, where a 1976 audit found Multnomah County squandering 3:1 on overhead vs. aid. HB 3644's lack of transparency invites the same.

Recent decades amplify the red flags. Oregon's 2017 PERS crisis ballooned to a \$27B deficit after rosy projections tanked—taxpayers bailed it out. The 2021 \$2.6B business tax (Measure 67) for schools saw funds diverted to bureaucracy, per a 2023 audit showing flat student outcomes. And don't forget Cover Oregon: \$305M blown on a failed 2013 healthcare site, scrapped after zero enrollments. HB 3644's fuzzy funding—\$217M now, more later—risks joining this hall of shame, with no clear metrics or accountability.

Portland's 19th-century mutual aid societies housed the needy without waste, adapting locally. Yet Oregon's 2003 Measure 30 tax hike for services fizzled—revenue bloated programs, not results, per a 2005 review. HB 3644's top-down dictate ignores that legacy, saddling taxpayers with a blank check. History and Oregon's own fiscal flops scream caution—decentralize, fund proven local efforts, not another Salem boondoggle.