

Submitter: Mark McDougall

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3644

I am writing to express my concerns and recommendations regarding HB 3644 and its approach to addressing homelessness in our state. While I appreciate the Legislature's increased investment in shelter funding since 2020, I believe HB 3644, in its current form, falls short of effectively addressing the root causes of chronic homelessness and may even exacerbate the problem. Despite significant state funding allocated to this issue, our community continues to struggle with the ongoing challenges of homelessness, and we are not seeing the improvements needed to make a positive impact in the lives of our constituents to include those experiencing homelessness.

I strongly urge the state to thoroughly investigate the structure and success of Medford's CHOP program and consider implementing a similar model statewide. This proven, results-oriented approach should be the benchmark for any state-funded initiatives aimed at addressing chronic homelessness. We must remove unnecessary barriers to treatment and ensure that individuals are given the support they need to overcome addiction and rebuilding their lives through facilitating a comprehensive, unified approach. Simply providing shelter without addressing the underlying issues of addiction and mental illness, and without accelerating access to treatment, is not a sustainable or effective solution.

Furthermore, I believe HB 3644 lacks crucial accountability measures. Just as cities are required to have transparent public processes for expenditures, so too should agencies receiving state funds. These monies come from the hard-working taxpayers of our state, and they deserve to know how their money is being spent. Agencies receiving funding should be required to provide detailed accounts of their expenditures and demonstrate measurable impact in reducing chronic homelessness. If taxpayer dollars are going to be allocated toward combating homelessness, we must ensure those taxpayer dollars are being used effectively to help people escape homelessness, not enable them to remain in it. Continued funding should be contingent upon demonstrable results. We cannot afford to continue throwing money at this problem without a clear strategy, measurable outcomes, and a commitment to removing the very obstacles that prevent people from getting the help they need. I urge you to consider my recommendations and work towards a more effective, accountable, and results-driven approach to addressing chronic homelessness in our state. I firmly believe a holistic approach that addresses the complex root causes of chronic homelessness is absolutely essential for creating lasting change. This comprehensive strategy will promote long-term stability and well-being for all our communities, ensuring that every resident of

Oregon's cities and town benefits. I believe this is the only way we can effectively address this critical issue and create a brighter future for our state.

Thank you,
Mark McDougall