

Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

My name is Josh Spector and I was born and raised on what we now call Portland, OR. I am here to speak on behalf of myself, Sunrise PDX, and some members of the houseless community. We strongly support the Right To Rest Act because this has to be a human right, and I am appalled that this is even a discussion.

I have lived almost my entire life in Oregon. I attended Oregon public schools from Kindergarten through my graduation from the University of Oregon in 2019. I always knew I wanted to spend my career working to fight the impending climate crisis.

Last year further woke me up to the interconnectedness of the issues many individuals in our society face. Racial injustice, economic inequality, and the climate crisis, all intersect at the point of State violence. Mazlow's hierarchy of needs points to a pyramid of human needs. Without the more basic level fulfilled, one cannot transcend to the next. Our State must provide at least the most basic level, which is physiological needs, air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, and access to hygiene facilities. I honestly cannot conceive being a human who holds power over millions of people and purposefully denies them of their most basic of human rights. Whether you're liberal, conservative, progressive, religious, atheist, or wherever your values are rooted, it is appalling to me that you can come up with any justification for holding another being's life at such a low value to not even allow them the most basic human needs.

Not only is it rest, but we need to give people the right to proper shelter through housing for all.

Instead of pursuing my career or furthering my formal education, I joined Sunrise PDX to work with other youth at tackling these intersecting issues. There are high school students who spend time in zooms organizing their peers, learning about these systems of society, and with elected officials begging them for a livable future instead of doing their homework or actually living their lives.

I spend time out in the community helping the houseless population with some of these most basic needs, bringing them food, water, and helping protect them from the State. I have had conversations with current houseless high school students about the struggle of completing their homework on their smartphone, because they don't have a computer, in a tent in a park while their stomachs growl, and Police threaten to take all of their belongings and arrest them. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE!

When I heard about this bill and testimony I talked to some of the houseless community about it. They all seemed overjoyed to the fact that they might achieve some level of peace. But as the time crept closer and I had deeper conversations with them about it, I began to better understand the helplessness they feel. One woman burst into tears this weekend when we were writing her testimony. She talked about her life and how State violence has pushed her into a cycle of deeper and deeper oppression. She decided to not testify because all she has experienced from the State her whole life has been violence. I could feel in my stomach, the terror in her cracking voice as she told me she feared simply the thought of coming before this body and speaking up for herself. The harms that the State inflicts on these populations is the same harm that brings me here today, for her, and all others. You have no idea what kind of damage you cause to other human beings on this Earth.

You as the power holders of our society are responsible for this and I don't know how you sleep at night when you don't even allow your most vulnerable constituents to.