

Submitter: Charles Wallace

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

The Portland area is facing a serious drug addiction and mental health crisis and is ruining our city. Enabling people to live on the streets or 'resting' (camping) in public places is not the answer. It is not compassionate because it creates a dangerous, unsanitary living situation for those individuals and the citizens of Portland.

Additionally, allowing 'resting' or camping in public places will ruin parks and public places and allow the small minority of houseless individuals to take over public places and prohibiting the vast majority of law-abiding and tax paying citizens from enjoying public spaces. Can you imagine taking your children to a public park to go on the swings or play structures and having people camping all over the place? It is not safe, sanitary or fair to our citizens. Allowing these camps has increased crime, trash and vandalism throughout our region. Encouraging and allowing this type of behavior is going to force good people to move away from the region. I have lived in Portland for 25 years and we are seriously considering leaving because of this crisis. Please look closely at the changes in the city of Portland over the past 3-4 years. A formerly vibrant and beautiful downtown has become overrun with crime, garbage and is no longer safe. Businesses are moving out of the downtown region. With our lenient drug laws and lack of criminal prosecution for any crime, many drug addicts are drawn to Portland from other states. Allowing 'resting' in public places will welcome more of this problem and enable drug addicts to further their addiction.

They will likely end up dying from their addiction or from living on the streets. The solution to this problem is to give the houseless people three choices: drug rehab, mental health institution or prison. Please use the money from the SHS to provide shelter AND drug rehab and mental health treatment, not to encourage a life on the streets. The vast majority of people in Portland agree with my statements. It is time to do the best for our society. Thank you.