

Submitter: Rich S

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I am writing in opposition HB3501. My girlfriend and I have spent the last year living in an apartment building in the central eastside neighborhood of Portland and have seen firsthand the severe safety issues to both the housed and unhoused that local homeless camps have created. The central eastside area currently has entire blocks taken over by temporary/non city authorized campsites and many people use the street in front of our apartment building as a thoroughfare between camp areas. In the 8 months that we've lived there we have:

- Been shot at with a paintball gun by a man in a nearby camp
- Walked outside to find another man passed out on the sidewalk with a needle in his arm
- Been chased inside the apartment lobby by a man experiencing a severe mental health episode
- Been chased at and yelled at by a man swinging a baseball bat
- Found dozens of syringes and needles while walking our dog

To put it frankly, it has become too dangerous for my girlfriend or I to feel comfortable walking our dog by ourselves without a weapon or pepper spray for personal protection. In my experience, these camps have been a major attractor of people experiencing severe mental health episodes, drug addiction or in many cases both and when the government turns a blind eye to them creates a dangerous environment both to us and those living on the street. This bill would further limit our local governments ability to address these issues. In any other element of our society we have accepted and embraced the fact that there is a need for some level of city/state regulation to ensure public safety and fairness. We regulate parking, car emissions, taxes, property uses and air bnb permits. We desperately need some sense of regulation and order when it comes to the issue of camping. This bill is the exact opposite of what we need, it doesn't actually help the unhoused who need it and limits the rights of small businesses, renters and home owners.

I'm asking for your opposition to this bill and support for the thousands of residents who are desperately seeking to maintain order within our cities that we work, live and pay taxes in.