



To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Paul Solomon, Sponsors Inc.
Date: May 4th, 2021
RE: HB 3115: Homelessness and Public Space

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am here today to speak in support of House Bill 3115. My name is Paul Solomon and I am the executive director of Sponsors.

Sponsors, is a national leader in the delivery of Reentry services. We operate 20 buildings on seven sites in Lane County with over 200 units of housing for individuals with criminal histories and ancillary programs. We also offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, mental health services and mentoring—that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community. We do this because we believe that people can and do change, and that interventions at the appropriate time can serve as a catalyst to lasting change.

We support HB 3115 because it stands for the principle that policing is not the solution to homelessness. We see the ways that enforcement of “livability” laws is harmful to many of the people that we serve. Saddling people living in extraordinarily difficult circumstances with fines they cannot pay and criminal records that create lifelong barriers to housing and employment has not prevented homelessness, it has fostered chronic homelessness on a large scale. Research confirms that successful responses to homelessness must include an end to criminalization practices, as well as the provision of housing and supportive services. It is not enough to create housing, we must also prevent harm.

HB 3115 will bring a greater degree of stability, health and community to people in Lane County and across the state. We look forward to participating in those local conversations. We urge your support for HB 3115.