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On Behalf Of: Marina Westerdahl
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure: HB3501

This bill is extremely broad and very evasive in its language. I wholeheartedly reject it and furthermore, believe that it would be extremely detrimental to the state of Oregon.

The Oregon Right to Rest Act—is a deceptive title, as the evidence shows that the majority of the homeless population is not resting, but actively doing drugs, vandalizing, destroying and littering on public property. Instead, we should be presenting the "Law Abiding Citizen Rights" to work and live peacefully bill.

This bill states that “many persons in Oregon have experienced homelessness as a result of economic hardship, a shortage of safe and affordable housing, the inability to obtain gainful employment and a disintegrating social safety net system.” It should state that many persons in Oregon have traveled from out of state because they have heard that in Oregon they will be allowed to live on public property, provided meals, needles, and complete lack of accountability. It should also be said that Oregonians have been taxed millions of dollars in order to provide safe and affordable housing to the homeless. The evidence has shown however, that many or most of those experiencing homelessness have rejected the opportunity to live in these houses, turned down social services, or drug rehabilitation as these require a measure of accountability.

This bill continues: “Decriminalization of rest allows local governments to redirect resources from local law enforcement activities to activities that address the root causes of homelessness and poverty.” The reality is that it further erodes law enforcement’s ability to intervene, it erodes the rights of law-abiding citizens and business owners to both live and commute in safe communities and conduct tax-generating business activities. The root causes of homelessness and poverty ought to be addressed and effective systems established, such as: inpatient mental health institutions, effective drug treatment facilities—before further eroding law enforcement’s ability to intervene and ignoring the rights of law-abiding citizens.

This bill states: “It is declared to be the public policy of Oregon to guarantee persons experiencing homelessness participation in the social and economic life of this state, remunerative employment, use of and free movement within public spaces, participation in and receipt of the benefits of the services, programs and activities of state government and local governments and housing accommodations of the person’s choice, without discrimination.” What does participation in the social and economic life of this state mean? Doesn’t this state already provide support and job

opportunities for those that are willing and able to work? What does the use and free movement within public spaces mean? Does this mean that they don't have to abide by the same laws that all other citizens must abide by? What about respecting the rights of its law-abiding citizens? And what does "housing accommodation of the person's choice" mean? Do they get to pick their citizen funded housing?

Furthermore, this bill states: ““Harassment” means a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a person experiencing homelessness that a reasonable person would consider as seriously alarming, tormenting or terrorizing of the person experiencing homelessness.” So basically, this would allow a law-abiding citizen to be prosecuted for interfering with homeless activities. This is criminalizing the victim and protecting the offender. Amazing what Oregon has come to!

Finally, this bill is extremely broad and very evasive in its language. I wholeheartedly reject it and furthermore, believe that it would be extremely detrimental to the state of Oregon.