

I would like to express my full support of HB2367 Oregon's Right to Rest Act. As a community member, researcher and local government employee working in housing policy, I know strategies that criminalize unsheltered homelessness do nothing to solve our homelessness crisis, and in reality, exacerbate existing challenges for individuals working to end their homelessness. Without enough options and spaces for unsheltered people to go, they have no choice but to exist in public spaces. Criminalizing poverty is not a solution, and we should be investing current enforcement dollars in affordable housing and other services for people experiencing homelessness. Particularly during the Covid pandemic when others are able to safety shelter in place, we must afford the same options to those who have no other viable options but to live outside.