

Submitter: Allison Carvalho

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

Hello,

I oppose the Right to Rest bill - because although the intention is clearly in the right place, I fear this will cause more issues for houseless neighbors, residents, businesses, people with disabilities who will have their ADA rights infringed upon, people pushing strollers who will have no choice but to walk in the street and I fear for the conflict that continues to happen due to public camping. I live right by Laurelhurst park- which has seen a string of campsites, fires, human excrement, excess of trash and gunfire. The camp has since been moved and a skate park has been put in, because the increase in violence and fire on site. A public camping site, even if legal, was not a long term solution- but rather a well intentioned one that ultimately caused more strain on houseless residents, community members and municipal resources.

If we legalize public camping, where will trash bins, bathrooms and sinks be placed to ensure houseless neighbors have access to safe and clean hygiene? Who and where will the funds come to maintain these areas? If we are investing money in all of the above to increase livability, could we not just invest in longer term solutions instead? What data shows us that this is the best or one of the best solutions to pursue livability and equity for houseless residents?

The public way is not healthy, happy or habitable for anyone - houseless or not. Public spaces are meant for all recreationally- and should be. However, recreational uses are very different than the demands of livability. By constitutionalizing the public right to camp, we are essentially telling people that it is good enough to be able to sleep outside. I want more for our houseless neighbors and the future of our Oregon, Multnomah and Portland communities.

I am curious how to operationalize and create systems of accountability for:
(b) A person experiencing homelessness has a privacy interest and a reasonable expectation of privacy in any property belonging to the person, regardless of whether the property is located in a public space. How would this law be monitored? Would any area be restricted? We know that living outside (whether due to rainy/cold/windy climates) is not easy, nor is it ideal. As such and understandably, some houseless people can and do turn to drugs, alcohol and fires to survive emotionally and physically. Does this law account for the additional strain that it will most likely add to police departments, fire departments, street response teams, trash and garbage teams, Public park staff, business districts and small businesses? What recourse

might a small business have if say, someone decides to camp in front of their restaurant? How are non-homeless residents access to safe and healthy recreational spaces built into and enforced through this law?

All people deserve to be safe, happy and healthy. However, in spending more time, civic and financial resources on short term or part time solutions like these, we are taking necessary time away from longer term solutions- affordable housing, drug rehabilitation, cohesive communities, etc..

The right to do something is very different than having your needs met. This bill falls short in that it creates the right to camp, without creating systems that actually increase equity for houseless individuals. I ask that when voting on this legislation that legislators consider the impact of this legislation 6 months, a year and 5 years down the line. Will this legislation solve the problem of homelessness, or will it ultimately create more problems that we will need to address?

Thank you for your time.

Allison