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March 10, 2021

To: [**House Committee on Judiciary**](#)

Chair, Representative Janelle Bynum
Vice-Chair, Representative Ron Noble
Vice-Chair, Representative Karin Power

Re: [**HB 3115 Right to Rest—SUPPORT**](#) with amendment incorporating HB 2376 elements

This bill simply makes it legal for people to move freely, rest, sleep, protect themselves from the elements, eat and share food, and perform other basic acts necessary for human survival.

We have also reviewed [**HB 2376**](#), assigned to this committee, and believe it offers stronger protections. An amendment process is imperative to strengthen HB3115 with elements of HB2376. HB2367 (Right to Rest Act) was **written by and brought forth directly by houseless communities and their voices must be heard**.

Unitarian Universalists (UU) Principles guide our selection of Oregon legislative bills to support. We support [**HB 3115**](#) based on our 1st, 2nd, 6th, and 7th Principles:

- [*1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;*](#)
- [*2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;*](#)
- [*3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;*](#)
- [*4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;*](#)
- [*5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;*](#)
- [*6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;*](#)
- [*7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*](#)

Unitarian Universalists participate in many local programs to help provide a stable place to sleep, food and other basic necessities to those who are houseless. However, the root cause is systemic and has festered over the past thirty years of public policy. HB 3115 would play a positive part in helping the houseless.

A society is judged by how it treats its weakest and most vulnerable members, those without influence or privilege, those who are often harassed or neglected. A good society acts to ensure that the weakest and most at-risk are protected. We believe housing is about opportunity, stability, and health. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible for individuals to hold down a job, or access neighborhood amenities. Why should a houseless person be treated as less than a human being? Houseless individuals are citizens; they have a right to exist in peace, seek safety and shelter. To this sick and disabled population, ***sit, lie, and blanket camping bans are uncommonly cruel.*** They are denied shelter. They are denied rest.

Without state action, it's probable that communities, out of frustration, will continue to impose local ordinances that prohibit camping, sleeping and lying that have a disparate impact on those in poverty, on the houseless, and especially the disabled members of that houseless community. Oregon cities are hardly the first to attempt to ban public camping as a response to the national houseless crisis. But nowhere have such laws and ordinances been shown to be effective.