

Submitter: Karl Mautner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

This bill (HB 3501) is utter insanity. Our current non-enforcement of camping laws encourages homeless drug addiction. This bill will only institutionalize it. If this bill passes our parks, right-of-ways, and any open public space will quickly fill with campers. The results will be that all those places will be covered with trash, human feces, food waste, needles, and so on. I know...I live in the Pearl District and have helped clean up abandoned homeless camps, and cleaned up around active ones. It is disgusting.

Our current policies--allowing unsanctioned camping, legalizing hard drugs, giving out free tents, sleeping bags, and tarps, not prosecuting low-level property crimes--have led a massive homeless and drug addiction problem on our streets. They are encouraging more homeless drug addicts to move here from all over the country. They are encouraging regular residents and citizen, and small and large businesses, to move out. Doubling down on failed policies is madness.

And please don't tell me that all we need to do is provide more housing and services. It will be hard enough to hire the hundreds of counsellors, treatment specialists, and who knows what else needed to handle the homeless we have now. Sanctioning unlimited camping, along with the existing legalization of hard drugs, will result in a complete overload and breakdown of any treatment system we could possibly create.