

I am Brion Cates, a resident of Stayton Oregon and I support Oregon's HB 2367 THE RIGHT TO REST ACT.

I believe every Oregonian regardless of background or living situation should have the right to exist in public without being harassed, given a citation, or arrested.

Law enforcement should not play a role in determining what is suitable for the public and public spaces. Homeless people need to be given the resources to support themselves rather than being punished for existing.

This is a critical action for keeping the lives of our community safe. Homeless people experience many physical hardships and also are at extreme risk for not getting the mental care they need and deserve to have resources to avoid tragedies such as suicide. A person's value is not determined by what they contribute or how much they make because these community members create life for others behind the scenes yet are punished in a cruel manner for seemingly their existence.

I personally have known families that I went to school with that came from low income families and have been at risk of homelessness had it not been for COVID-19 regulations. I support Oregon's HB 2367 THE RIGHT TO REST ACT because I have been graced and supported by the lives of those in my community who have barely been able to provide for themselves yet always found a way to share the kindness and beauty of this world when I was close to taking my own life.

Housing instability affects everyone, especially people of color and it's important that homelessness is taken seriously rather than dehumanizing people who are experiencing a personal hell of isolation upheld by capitalist values. The lives of our community will always be more important than property, and Oregon communities have the means and resources to support homeless people, especially when the health of our nation relies on us to support and keep everyone safe from disasters and our ongoing pandemic. I urge all legislators to consider the support of Oregon's HB 2367 THE RIGHT TO REST ACT as an act of public safety, one that protects the sacred communities we have rather than the properties we are supposed to share. It is a tragedy of all the lives that have faded away without recognition or community care because they weren't accepted into capitalist society.

I thank everyone taking the time to consider my opinion and I hope you understand that why I value the lives of homeless people is because I would not be alive without the acceptance the homeless community and people at risk of homelessness have shown me.