

Keith Comess

#267106 | March 6, 2021

Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

The City's response to the homeless problem is simultaneously an expedient and thoroughly cynical one. Rather than actually taking concrete initiatives (that cost money, time, effort and leadership), the Council and other elements of the City administration adopt a pseudo-progressive stance on "homeless rights". This "solves" the problem by dumping people in tents on public grounds, including parkland. Simple presence of "a bathroom" and "a dumpster" as the requisite infrastructure is admittedly low-cost and this amended initiative will produce the desired apparent short-term "solution". It also gives a veneer of empathy and concern to the relevant agencies, one that is undeserved. By failing to provide meaningful shelter, sanitary facilities, mental health intervention, drug/alcohol counseling, job training and the other well known requisites, this expedient solution simply covers for lack of actual substantive aid. That helps nobody except the Council: they've "solved" the problem and actually done nothing. Parenthetically, it also creates the substrate for future and likely even bigger problems.

Testimony is presented without formatting.