

# Celia Ruiz

**#278007 | March 16, 2021**

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Portland City Council: I have written in the past to the Mayor's office with my concerns about the humanitarian crisis that is overtaking the City of Portland and negatively impacting upon all members of our community. Unfortunately, I have never received a response. Over the years, I have seen what appears to be a policy of neglect and inaction towards homelessness. This neglect has seen the problem multiply and has not contributed to dealing with the root cause of what we are seeing on our streets: growing encampments of poor, drug addicted, or mental health impaired individuals throughout our neighborhoods. These encampments do not offer safe areas for cooking, restrooms to relieve themselves or showers. There are no social service workers doing triage, finding medical help for those that need it, temporary shelter for those who lost their job or have been kicked out of foster care because they turned 18, or drug treatment for those trapped in the illness of addiction. This is a failed policy of neglect. The current proposal only promises to extend this problem city wide. What is needed is action to address the underlying causes of homelessness. A committee that will include all members of our community: property owners, renters, students, educators, health care professionals, and housing specialists. My house on SE 35th is around the corner of Sunnyside Elementary where there is a large encampment. The children that use the park or attend school are exposed to these miserable conditions. What are we teaching our children about our community? These are not lessons in care and compassion. I urge you to vote against this measure and empower a committee to look into viable and healthy solutions. Portland is a vibrant city and it can set the model. Continuing to ignore the underlying causes of poverty and homelessness is neglect in its cruelest sense.

Testimony is presented without formatting.