

Eishin Takahashi

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

I have visited many places around the world, and I have to say that Portland is one of the best cities I have ever visited. The city is highly regarded for its nature, friendly people, and well-designed infrastructure developments. Every time I had out of town guests (including visitors from other countries), I was so proud to show our beautiful city and told them how lucky I was to be able to live in such a great city. The situation, however, has dramatically changed over the past few years. In February 2020, I had some guests from another country, and when I took them for sightseeing in downtown, one of the first things they commented on was the large number of homeless people. Simply, they were shocked. I struggled to explain about the situation, however, it made me think about my favorite city a lot. Portland has been facing many challenges recently, and we all need to work together to find solutions for a better society. However, I really do not believe that allowing people to camp in our public parks will help the situation. Some might say that public parks are for everyone, and it is true, however, public parks need to be used in respectful and safe ways; parks are where families take kids, older people, and where people spend time with their friends. Freedom is not free, and it exists when people respect some rules and follow commonsense. As a parent of three kids, I do not think that parents would feel comfortable for their kids to go to public parks in downtown Portland, especially if camping is allowed.

Testimony is presented without formatting.