

Mark Robben

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

I am against allowing the homeless to camp in city parks, though that is what they've been doing for years anyway. Just not sanctioned. I have lived on the edges of a city park almost all my life (Creston) and have had to deal with Portland's homeless problem off and on for years. They are literally out my back gate. As a group, they are usually non-threatening, sometimes polite. That perception is from an older male so I don't know what it feels like for females and young kids. The point is, we (my wife and I) have cleaned out abandoned camps, picked up hundreds of syringes, liquor bottles, beer and wine containers and food trash for years. I'm tired of it. They don't pay taxes and I do. If allowed to camp and set up permanently you will be denying the parks for the majority of the city's population. The parks will be seen, and often correctly, as not safe. Creston Park just underwent a nine month playground and disability access renovation. Why would we jeopardize peoples ability to enjoy that? I am well aware that many of these people are mentally ill and addicted. Trust me, I encounter them every day taking the dog out. I have gotten to the point that if they won't accept treatment and recovery then that is not my problem to fix but theirs and they can do it some place else than out my back gate. Between Covid and this "homeless crisis," I don't see Portland being vibrant again in my lifetime.

Testimony is presented without formatting.