

Jason Zaslav

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

I'd like to state that I oppose any measure allowing Portland's public parks to be used as homeless shelters/encampments. Public parks are designed to be quiet greenspaces for the community and wildlife to enjoy, not long term camping facilities. It is my opinion that opening our public parks as camping facilities for the homeless will only compound Portland's homeless problem, resulting in more, non resident and out of state homeless coming to Portland to use these spaces. Using our parks as homeless living spaces will also present real hazards (used needles, human waste, drug peddling, aggressive and/or violent individuals, etc.) to the communities around these parks and the tax paying citizens who wish to use our parks. As a city we need to provide services (real recovery services: mental health, addiction, and job training services) for those who WANT help, but we need to get tough on those who are taking advantage of the city's (and taxpayer's) generosity. Opening our public parks (and services) to addicts and criminals who DO NOT WANT help to change, only compounds the problem. Compassion is an important ingredient, but it only goes so far before it becomes enablement. Portland must address this problem with a strategy of "Tough Compassion" versus the current, clearly ineffective approach, of zero accountability for those using Portland's free services. The message to send is a simple one: Show us that you want to join society and contribute to this city's prosperity, and we'll help you. Show us that you don't, and we won't, but we won't tolerate loitering, crime, and abuse of public spaces either.

Testimony is presented without formatting.