

Jessica Ramirez Vasquez

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

Portland City Council, I appreciate your efforts to address the homeless crisis in the City of Portland. I am a Portland native, born and raised in North Portland, and currently a resident and tax payer in SW Portland. I support a conscientious, compassionate, and comprehensive solution to houselessness in Portland. I do NOT support the implementation of a program that is a cheap “fix” as the city becomes filled with trash and doesn’t actually address people’s situation in houselessness. As a daughter of immigrants who were doing their best to acculturate in a new country and make a living, my few entertainment options included local libraries and parks (pier park, columbia park, peninsula park, etc.). I remember parks being safe and clean places for fresh air and exercise. Today, however, many parents are worried about their children stepping out of their home in apartment buildings because of homeless camps in the areas such as the Peninsula Crossing Trail. Parents are rightfully worried about children stepping on syringes or being exposed to drug use. I am a teacher and know how difficult staying at home has been for children over the last year, and parks need to stay safe for people of all ages, but especially children. Recently, one supposed solution was to place boulders under bridges. It cost tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars to do that. We have more homeless camps than ever. I ask that now, instead of setting up more camps, you try to set in place ways of addressing the root causes of homelessness. Please set up shelters that allow families to stay there for 1-2 years as people get back on their feet. Please open up mental health facilities that are free to the patients dealing with bipolar disorder, psychosis, schizophrenia, the list goes on. Please provide rehabilitation services for people suffering from addiction. It is unethical to keep people in their houseless situation and to use taxpayer dollars for this. I ask that you use my tax dollars to provide actual help. Sincerely, Jessica Ramirez Vasquez

Testimony is presented without formatting.