

From: [Kris Greene](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Council Testimony 10-26-22 Agenda Items 899-903
Date: Friday, October 28, 2022 10:10:03 AM

Good morning,

I'm hoping I'm not too late to advocate for my fellow citizens. The majority of US citizens are a single missed paycheck away from houselessness, and this is especially true as housing prices soar. In September, the state announced a drastic raise in the rent increase cap for 2023 at 14.6%, nearly 5% higher than the previous year. I don't need to tell you that this is exorbitant and will certainly see further increases in homelessness in the future.

I also don't need to tell you that the average time for short term houselessness is roughly the average time it takes to find a new job in the state. With weather changes and the rampant wildfires, it is increasingly important that we respond with gentleness and compassion to our houseless neighbors. Charging people a fine for camping when they have limited options is borderline criminal. Sending these same people to prison when they are unable to pay is atrocious.

A number of business owners and local influencers have made a fuss about campers as a whole, but we cannot put property value above human lives. They want to create a state-wide debtors prison for the most impoverished among us. They will do anything it takes to defend their bottom line. They do not have the peoples' best interests in mind, unless those interests happen to align with their five year profit plans.

As someone who works and lives in Portland, and as someone who walked across the Burnside bridge into downtown every single day last year, I did not feel unsafe as a result of those camping. May I suggest that the true issues here are a mental health crisis that has not been properly addressed, along with addiction to dangerous drugs. Penalizing an entire population of people when only a few have proven violent is the equivalent of slapping a bandaid on a broken femur. I urge the city to consider alternatives. Do not ban camping. It is not illegal to simply exist in common spaces. Rather, we must recognize that houseless people and campers are *part* of our vibrant community, and it is our responsibility to protect and enrich one another's lives.

Thank you for hearing my piece and considering alternatives to criminalizing poverty.

Have a great day,

(I wish to remain anonymous for fear of backlash in my workplace.)