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AGAINST GENTRIFICATION



A coalition of advocates for low-income and houseless people are campaigning in support of a bill that would decriminalize sleeping and resting outdoors.

New Bill Seeks 'Right to Rest'

HB 2215 would upend ordinances that criminalize resting outside

By Christen McCurdy
Of The Skanner News

A bill before the Oregon legislature this session creates sweeping protections for unhoused people — and aims to effectively dismantle hundreds of local ordinances that criminalize sleeping in public.

House Bill 2215, which advocates are calling the Right to Rest Act, has the backing of the Western Regional Advocacy Project — a multi-state coalition of social justice organizations — and local homeless advocacy groups like Sisters of the Road and Street Roots, as well

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House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis. speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington Wednesday as the GOP works on its long-awaited plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

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International Women's Day

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PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Omari Tahir-Garrett listens to Clifford Cawthon, with Seattle SAFE (Standing Against Foreclosure & Eviction) talk about what happened to Mr. Garrett when he appeared in court to fight against eviction from the house he lives in, and is the location of the Umoja Fest Peace Center. Mr. Garrett was taken into custody and detained in the King County Jail for several days without access to council or any information as to why he was jailed. SAFE called attention to Mr. Garrett's experience because it highlights the gentrification and loss of affordable housing in Seattle's historically Black Central District.

Oregonians Favor Reduced Drug Charges

Majority polled, law enforcement support de-felonizing drug possession

By Melanie Sevcenko
Of The Skanner News

The House Committee on Judiciary held a hearing Monday where lawmakers, community advocates and law enforcement testified in favor of reducing small-possession drugs charges from a felony to a misdemeanor. HB 2355 would also establish a statewide system to hold law enforcement departments accountable for profiling practices.

During the hearing, Sen. Lew Frederick said that

possession reclassification would prove to break redundant patterns in the legal system.

"I fully expect that we will see a number of those no longer wrapped up in the stigma of being labeled a felon," said Frederick. "Now they will be able to move along, contributing to society instead of stuck in the continued punishment cycle. That cycle does not work."

Gov. Kate Brown, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, House Speaker Tina Kotek, the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association, and

the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police have all endorsed HB 2355.

The hearing comes less than a week after the ACLU of Oregon released a statewide poll that revealed staggering public support of drug sentencing reform.

The poll shows that 73 percent of Oregon voters overwhelmingly favor changing small-scale possession charges to a misdemeanor, instead of a felony, which carries harsher penalties such as lengthy prison sentences and larger fines. Only 19 percent oppose the proposed de-felo-

nization.

"Rather than ensuring that people have access to treatment and recovery, our system focuses primarily on a criminal justice response," stated David Rogers, executive director of the ACLU of Oregon, during a Wednesday morning press conference for the poll's findings.

"Let's be clear, the War on Drugs is a failure. It has damaged families and ruined lives... and has cost taxpayers billions of dollars," continued Rogers,

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Activists Launch 'Resistance Talks'

Know Your City, Portland's Resistance launch series of conversations

By Melanie Sevcenko
Of The Skanner News

In the months following the presidential election, Portland has become a hotbed of protest and resistance which has largely decreed, "Trump is not my president."

Through the galvanization of marches and masses — and \$1 million worth of damage to downtown Portland — one group has emerged as

the city's largest activist movement: Portland's Resistance.

Its leader is 24-year-old African American law student, Gregory McKelvey, who has become the charismatic face of Portland's anti-Trump movement.

While the organization has garnered national attention for its wide-spread anti-Trump protests, the Portland native admits that the media has been more focused on its



PHOTO BY MELVIN HERNANDEZ

Portland's Resistance leader Gregory McKelvey at Trump inauguration protest, January 2017, Portland.

clashes with police, rather than the movement's message. For McKelvey,

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