

Sasha Saedan
Portland

Dear distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,
My name is Sasha Saedan, i go to Casco Bay High school and I am resident of
Portland. I am urgently asking you to vote in support of LD 1478: An Act To
Decriminalize Homelessness.

This critical legislation would ensure that homelessness is not criminalized and that
trained mental health and substance use professionals would respond to encounters
between law enforcement officers and people experiencing homelessness. Further, it
would work to connect people with crisis services, emergency and transitional
housing, and case management.

(Insert your personal story, comments, thoughts)

The criminalization of homelessness reinforces the marginalized status of people
experiencing homelessness, disconnects people from the services that they need, and
further traumatizes individuals by involving them in our punitive criminal justice
system. Criminalizing someone experiencing homelessness dehumanizes that person
and places blame on the individual, rather than the larger systems that continue to fail
people who are seeking help.

For these reasons, I am asking you to vote in support of this much needed bill so that
people are met with empathy and the resources they deserve, rather than
criminalization and incarceration.

Thank you for your time,
Sasha