

The Portland area is rapidly taking on the appearance of a third world country and no rational person could conclude the policies of tolerance are improving the homeless situation in this state. I was the director of Transition Projects Men's Services Programs for ten years, overseeing the operations of two 90 bed case-managed homeless shelters. I have known and worked with thousands of homeless people in the area over the years.

The people who advocate for letting such encampments continue may be well-meaning, but it is a false compassion not based in experience or wisdom. It may feel good to virtue-signal opposition to clearing such camps, especially if they don't seem likely to effect your daily life, but it's akin to giving a heroin-addicted family member \$20 when you know they're going to put it in their arm. It's ultimately lazy and selfish and may lead to the death of your relative.

Those camps are hot spots of crime and addiction and all the disease transmission you would expect from human waste without sanitation. They only grow, and are not just an eyesore but become serious environmental problems. When they are cleared the authorities come with social service providers and it may be the opportunity some individual has to access treatment and change their life. Even the discomfort of relocating can be valuable, as it can contribute to whatever that individual's personal rock-bottom might be. Consider that each night they stay, that is a night maybe someone dies of an overdose in their tent, or is raped or beaten, or is tempted to commit a crime in the neighborhood that leads to someone getting hurt.

No one can honestly claim ignorance of the consequences this false compassion generates when you can drive around Portland and see the horrible conditions the city has fallen into over the last decade.