

Hello - I am writing to fix ballot measure 110 by making hard drugs like meth, heroin and fentanyl a misdemeanor crime and by increasing penalties for drug dealing and drug use in public.

I was personally affected by the increased drug use in Portland as recently as last year. I was walking my dog along NE Brazee in the Hollywood neighborhood. My dog did his business on the public parking strip between the sidewalk and the curb. When I went to pick up his business using a plastic bag, I pricked my finger on something very sharp hidden in the grass. I looked down and was shocked to see that I had pricked my finger on a hypodermic needle. Terrified, I went into the ER where I waited for several hours to be seen, worried the entire time that I was exposed to viruses that are spread by heroin users through hypodermic needles, such as HIV and Hepatitis C. When I was finally seen by an ER doctor, I had to make agonizing decisions about exposure treatments such as HIV PrEP, which causes months of diarrhea, nausea, headache, fatigue, and stomach pain, and Hepatitis C vaccines. I was given an exposure screening test and I made the very tough decision that I was going to take on the burden of risk of being exposed to HIV over the onerous and very physically demanding PrEP treatment program. I was given two rounds of the Hepatitis C vaccine and I have to go in for HIV testing every year for a few years to make sure I wasn't exposed.

I know that my story is not unique or even one of the most tragic of those I have heard from other citizens and business owners in Portland, but I would have never thought that a normal and everyday activity such as walking my dog would lead to such a terrifying ordeal.

Thank you for reading,
Camille Russell
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