

Dear Committee Members,

I've lived in Portland since 1989. Next month, I'll turn 60. I chose to remain in Portland even after my wife and I started a family fifteen years ago. Like most people who live and own property here, I pay one of the highest total tax rates in the **nation**.

It's crazy. Portland, a city nearly exactly the same size as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, enjoys a tax base about 7 times larger than our Midwest contemporaries. And with their relative tax revenue, Milwaukee employs about 1800 police officers to our 700 or so. Pathetic.

Ten years ago, I cherished the opportunities my son enjoyed simply because we lived in the city. The Library, The Streetcars, MAX, Pioneer Square, Waterfront Park, Downtown. The city was his playground. No more. In the last few years, the city has become a shell of its former self.

I hate the lawlessness, the filth, and the obvious stench of failure everywhere. I tell my son, "this is apparently the best the people currently in charge can do for us. Hopefully, your generation can do much better." I have no doubt they will. Because my generation has let the City and The State of Oregon down. You can be the start of something better.

If I were in charge, I would make possession of lethal drugs like fentanyl, heroin, and meth a misdemeanor crime again. Is it really so hard to see that the open-air drug markets aren't helping people? And, give law enforcement the right tools to steer addicts toward mandatory treatment and **away** from jail. I think it's important to prioritize diversion programs that focus on a path to recovery and a clean criminal record.

While you are at it, you should also increase penalties for drug dealing and public drug use. That would be a start to making things make sense again.

Please take legislative action this session. People are dying each day under Measure 110. People are giving up their downtowns and their lawmakers. Thank you.

-James Marr
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