

I am writing to draw your attention to a pressing issue that demands our collective concern and immediate action, the punishment of an individual who is merely attempting to survive— the plight of individuals experiencing layered trauma which is the root of Measure 110 this due to a lack of comprehensive accessible support systems. Criminalizing an individual self medicating to suppress trauma, negative thoughts, and situation is how the human survives.

It is imperative to recognize the urgent need to address the deepening crisis of substance use and homelessness in our community. We stand at a critical juncture where our choices can either lead to genuine resolution by actually changing our perspectives or perpetuate the ineffective cycle of misdirected funding towards programs and avenues that obviously have proven not to work.

The scenarios we face, particularly with vulnerable individuals resorting to self-medication and subsequently experiencing homelessness, demand a fundamental reevaluation of our approach. It is evident that current programs and choices have, regrettably, proven ineffective in stemming the tide of these interconnected issues, and lack of true collaboration towards the same goal.

As stewards of our community's well-being, I implore you to consider redirecting resources towards solutions that have demonstrated efficacy.

Scientific evidence underscores the connection between substance use, nutritional deficiencies, and the enduring impact of stress-induced hormonal imbalances. This further complicating the physical and mental well-being of affected individuals.

- Nutritional Support Programs: Implement targeted programs that address nutritional deficiencies, providing accessible and nutrient-dense food options for those impacted by substance use and homelessness.
- Health Education Initiatives: Develop community-wide educational campaigns to raise awareness about the crucial role of nutrition in overall well-being, emphasizing the impact on mental health and recovery.

Criminalizing individuals who are addicted and homeless can be perceived as a punitive measure for those who are essentially trying to survive amidst ongoing crises. Rather than addressing the root causes of their situations, such as addiction and homelessness, criminalization often exacerbates the challenges these individuals face, compounding their struggles instead of providing the support and understanding needed for recovery and stability.

Criminalizing humans for surviving in a situation not adequate enough to provide the simplest of basic needs. A situation most often times perpetuated by laws that create barriers, and an economy that creates additional socioeconomic disparities by the hand of government.

"Policy oscillation" or "policy whipsaw," where there's a fluctuation between granting certain rights or liberties and subsequently imposing restrictions or barriers. It can indeed lead to challenges and disruptions in individuals' lives as they navigate changing policies and regulations. Analyzing the motivations behind such shifts can involve examining political, social, or economic factors influencing policy decisions.

This could be characterized as a policy paradox where "maybe" a well-intentioned policy, like partial decriminalization, leads to unexpected negative outcomes. A policy backfire or a counterproductive measure, as it advertently exacerbates the issue it was meant to address.

This pattern of "policy oscillation" or "policy whipsaw," where there's a fluctuation between granting certain rights or liberties and subsequently imposing restrictions or barriers. It leads to challenges and disruptions in individuals' lives as they navigate changing policies and regulations. We must analyze the motivations behind such shifts which involves examining political, social, or economic factors influencing policy decisions and profit.

Similar pattern in the realm of other areas such as housing. Even though housing isn't the topic, it is the tactics that are being used that need to be addressed, this pattern is described as a cycle of granting certain rights or assistance, followed by the implementation of policies or changes that inadvertently create barriers or challenges for individuals seeking stability.

This cycle can contribute to housing instability and disparities in access to affordable housing. It often involves complex interactions between government policies, economic factors, and societal dynamics. While fair housing rights aim to

prevent discrimination, practices such as credit checks can inadvertently impact certain individuals, creating barriers to housing access.

This inconsistency can contribute to challenges in achieving truly equitable housing opportunities. Analyzing and addressing such discrepancies is crucial for crafting more effective and fair housing policies. Throughout history, instances of policy contradictions or unintended consequences have arisen in various contexts.

- Prohibition in the United States (1920-1933):

Prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol was intended to address social issues but led to the rise of illegal activities, speakeasies, and organized crime.

- War on Drugs (1970s onwards):

Strict drug policies, while aiming to reduce substance abuse, have resulted in the mass incarceration of individuals, disproportionately affecting certain communities and contributing to long-term societal issues.

- Redlining and Fair Housing Act (1930s-1960s):

While the Fair Housing Act aimed to eliminate discrimination, the historical practice of redlining (denying loans or insurance based on neighborhood demographics) created persistent housing disparities.

- Welfare Reform in the 1990s:

Changes in welfare policies were intended to encourage self-sufficiency, but they sometimes led to increased poverty, especially among vulnerable populations.

- Financial Deregulation (late 20th century):

Policies aimed at promoting economic growth through financial deregulation contributed to the 2008 global financial crisis.

Structural inequality where policies, and laws even if they are stated to before a certain group they seem to be designed to target specific demographics, have disparate effects on certain populations, exacerbating existing social disparities.

Deliberate use of policies to disadvantage specific populations, raising ethical and social justice concerns. Such arguments calls for a reassessment of not only policies to ensure fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances but a moral and ethical concern.

One could argue that the current approach of funneling resources toward suppressing the symptoms of addiction and homelessness, without addressing the root causes, is not only a misallocation of funds but a perpetuation of a crisis that could be more effectively resolved.

By channeling investments into comprehensive, holistic solutions—such as affordable housing, mental health support, and rehabilitative programs—we not only demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of our citizens but also stand to create a society that is healthier, more resilient, and economically prosperous in the long run. It's time to reevaluate our strategies, prioritize sustainable change, and ensure that every dollar spent is a step toward resolving, rather than perpetuating, the challenges we face.

Please let's all be mindful of the additional trauma that occurs when a human is already in a crisis. I know it feels like we have tried everything but really let be honest, we haven't. I am truly praying that these are not intentional.

No, I do not believe decriminalization of drugs was the answer, it gave way to say, "It is okay to do it in public." Yet what's done is done, and to even think of going back would be like we manipulated them. Policies as such intentionally designed to disproportionately affect vulnerable groups implies a manipulative approach that can exploit existing social disparities. This highlights concerns about fairness, transparency, and the ethical implications of policy decisions.

To truly resolve societal issues, let's not merely seek input from those affected; let's empower them in the very fabric of decision-making. Inclusion isn't just about suggestions; it's about employing the diverse voices of lived experiences, prioritizing people over profit and genuine change over bureaucratic boards. Until you have marinated in the thick of it, you can not begin to grasp the barriers and hardship. People who have experienced situations as such and risen above it have passion, and where passion resides is where resolution follows.

Thank you for your time,

Tiffany Graven