

Measure 110 needs to be revised. Making hard drugs effectively legal might be good in theory, but in practice it has been a disaster. Just look at our streets

The proponents of Measure 110 say the best outcomes are when addicts voluntarily come in for treatment. That may be true, but addicts do not come in for treatment voluntarily. Proof is in the thousands of citations the police have given out since 110 was adopted; 75% of the citations were ignored, and less than 0.5% of the citations resulting in completion of the referral process. Mind you, that is 3 or 4 out of each 1000 citations. Mind you, that is the referral process, not actual treatment.

The reason is simple...Under Measure 110 there is little incentive for a homeless addict to go into treatment. Whatever carrots you might offer pale in comparison to the biggest carrot of all: their next fix. Weighing that against facing detox, their choice is simple. That will not change with more treatment options, or anything else. It will only change if they are pushed into treatment.

Yes, the success rate of involuntary treatment is lower than that of voluntary treatment. But the success rate for staying on the street, no treatment at all, is zero. And absent a serious push, addicts will opt to remain on the street chasing their next fix, rather than face detox.

Removing criminal penalties for hard drugs has been a mistake. Effectively legalizing their use has led to plummeting prices--fentanyl is now \$1 or \$2 per pill on the street. That, combined with our lax enforcement of camping laws and petty crimes has attracted homeless addicts from around the country. Outreach workers report that half or more of the homeless addicts they encounter are from out of state.

The proponents of Measure 110 keep saying that all we need to do is expand our services. But service providers report that they are finding it extremely difficult to recruit enough qualified people to fill the positions they have open. It will be enough of a struggle to provide adequate services for our own, home-grow addicts. Adding in the out-of-state addicts will overwhelm any system we could possibly set up.

We need to stop encouraging homeless addicts to move to Portland. Re-criminalizing hard drugs is an important piece of that.. I am not necessarily advocating throwing addicts in jail (and giving them a prison record) merely for addiction, but our current policies of effectively legalizing hard drugs is ruining Portland.

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