

Tragically, our once popular, exemplary downtown core has become a place avoided for the sake of its rampant open drug use, drug sales, and personal and property crime. I have worked in downtown Portland for over four decades--twenty years as a paramedic, and the past twenty years as a pastor of a 149-year-old downtown church. In all that time I have never observed the degree of drug use and sales on our our downtown streets as I do today. The diminishment of police staffing, discouragement of police intervention in open drug use, the certainty of not being arrested, and the general absence of any consequences for open drug use (which of course, result in a robust market of illegal drug sales on the street), have resulted in downtown Portland becoming a near dystopian ruin of a once stable, prosperous, popular destination, both for out of town visitors and fellow Portlanders.

I urge our state lawmakers to repeal this misguided, failed attempt at addressing our city's drug tragedy, and instead make treatment and recovery a mandatory alternative to jail, and also fully empower and support our police officers in the herculean task of turning downtown Portland back into a safe, desirable place for all people. Please respect what appears to me to be an overwhelming desire of Oregonians for BM 110 to be repealed, without delay.

Sincerely,  
Kenneth Garrett

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