

Decriminalizing drug use did not bring in more drug use, it did bring it out in the open, and seen. Drug use seems more prevalent because of that, especially in conjunction with the last few years when people lost much. Just because an echelon of Portlanders don't want to see drug use is not a good enough reason to go back to criminalizing those using.

Going back to criminalizing drug use is not going to stop people from using. What it will do is unnecessarily punish those who are struggling, or have unprocessed trauma, or have a yet to be treated mental illness. Humans falter. Criminalizing drug use will create more disastrous obstacles for those using it to get to a place of turning around their addiction. Having a record will create more difficulties to get back on one's feet after an addiction. It will create more harm to those who need more help.

It will also cost taxpayers money in destructive acts on our troubled citizens. That money would be better spent on an infrastructure that would treat addiction, trauma, mental illness, so those who want and are able to rejoin productive society can do with the tools to. When Portland gutted their mental health safety so many years ago, we set our society up for this failure of infrastructure. Now is the time to rebuild that societal net to support those who need it, not to punish them.

Thank you,
Jean Thomas
Portlander- 25 years