

To the Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response,

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

I live full-time in downtown Portland. About 3 months ago, in the park across the street, an open air drug market started appearing every evening. The park is called Shemanski Park.

The dealers, small crews of masked, hooded and frankly likely armed young men, wander the park and sidewalks. The dozens of addicts that flood the park also fill any hole in any building they can find, including the front entrance to the building I live in. Often, there are groups of 5, 6, 7 and above people completely blocking the entrance to the building while they loiter, do drugs, oftentimes light fires, and completely trash the area.

I chair the HOA. Residents won't go outside after dark. Parents are worried about their kids inhaling drugs on their way into the building. We are constantly asking groups of addicts to clear our entrance, which we almost always need to call Downtown Clean and Safe to help with because they won't leave.

My father is a lifelong alcoholic and drug addict. I totally support a compassion-driven impulse towards those suffering from addiction. With that said, we cannot allow the erosion of our communities from within by not establishing clear and prohibitive boundaries. We cannot "hand-hold" addicts into treatment, as my father (and mother) would readily attest. An addict does not always simply walk into treatment and is thereafter on the path to recovery. Sometimes it takes dozens of relapses and do overs.

We must be clear and bold with our changes to the current drug policies under Measure 110. We cannot heal all of the sick right now, as these decriminalization advocates seem to want us to aspire to. We must create clear boundaries in order for the general public to thrive, and in the background work on building infrastructure for helping filter out those who would sincerely pursue recovery and helping them in that trajectory.

I've lived in Portland my whole life. I voted yes on 110. I see how much of a mistake that was, and how misled we were to not understand the signals we would be sending to addicts outside of the state and to drug trafficking organizations. We must send loud and clear signals that we will not tolerate drugs proliferating on our streets, nor all of the associated crime and debris that follows in the wake of the pursuit and use of illicit drugs. We must get the genie back in the bottle.

I'm currently living in what seems to be a heart of the crisis. Adapting to these circumstances has been a massive and painful challenge for our small multi-family community. We must reflect our seriousness about the safety, livability and growth of our communities by endorsing serious penalties for bringing drugs into them, which is why I believe we must make possession of deadly drugs a Class A Misdemeanor.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jared Boe
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