

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Jean Bockelman <jeanilb@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2020 12:05 AM
To: citycouncil
Cc: wmwoodwort@statesmanjournal.com
Subject: Sit - lie ordinances
Attachments: Charles K Homeless 2.jpg

Categories: Council Dox

Dear Councilors,

As you consider ordinances to curb urban camping and public streets squatting by homeless persons, in light of the Covid-19 outbreak, please reflect on the effects of lack of minimal hygiene on all individuals and our community.

From my personal observations during 14 years of outreach to homeless persons, their lack of ability, willingness, or opportunity to live with basic personal cleanliness has long been a community health issue. MRSA, hepatitis, scabies, HIV and more have been carried to many public places by our homeless neighbors, especially IV drug users. Besides having made many public places feel unsafe for children and many citizens, even those that feel safe, like a McDonald's bathroom, is in all probabilities not very safe if a homeless person has just used it for an injection site.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/index.html>

It is also not safe for homeless persons.

The well written StatesmanJournal news article by Whitney Woodworth describes some of the remedies now under consideration and costs.

Ineffective compassion is compassion that neither heals or helps change destructive self harming behaviors.

Everything we do to make people more comfortable on the streets will harm them.

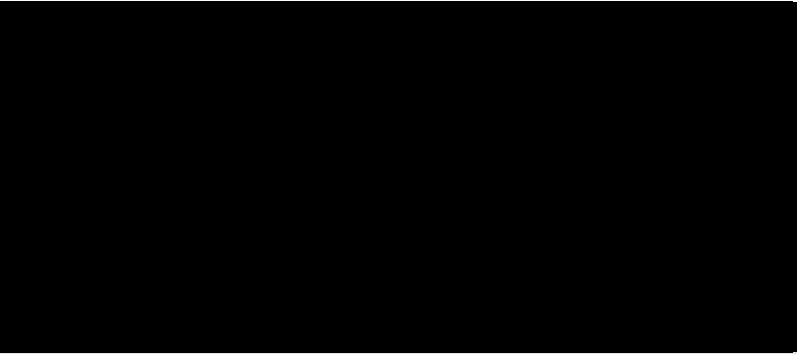
If those propositions are true-- as experience has taught me they are-- then some of these costly proposals will actually harm all citizens.

I do not have all of the answers, but please consider that approximately 80% of homeless persons have family members who have tried and would do anything to have their son/daughter, brother/sister, mother/father home again, if they could be supported in A&D or mental health treatment and family healing. A comprehensive program to reconnect people to their family may be extremely helpful and money well spent.

Choices of jail time or treatment with a commitment to a continuum of care may benefit many. I have been grateful for friends arrested and put in jail for some weeks since it afforded them the opportunity to gain sobriety, at least a temporary reprieve from chronic self harming and dangers of the streets. Some received excellent mental health care. Jail is expensive, but I am wondering if a separate program for homeless offenses could be designed, executed in either the unused pod at Marion County jail, or the empty minimum security facility at OSP.

We know of the huge costs and failure of Portland's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. Yet Marysville, WA has enjoyed much greater success at lower costs and more helpful to people suffering on the streets.

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Marysville comes up with creative solution for homeless problem

The city of Marysville has seen impressive returns from a new program that offers its homeless lawbreakers an ul...

Please consider their solutions. I believe it is far more compassionate and supports community health far more robustly.

Best

Jean Bockelman-McInnis

“Why do you think we have so many homeless? Destitution? Poverty has declined since the 1950s. The majority of those sleeping on grates are mentally ill. In the name of civil liberties, we let them die with their rights on.”

Charles Krauthammer

