

Re: Council Testimony by Fritz Jünker, Portland Resident, fritz@fjportland.com
To: Portland Mayor & City Council, Delivered October 28th, 2015

**City Policy is Making Portland a Destination for “Lifestyle Vagrancy,” Lawlessness, and Crime
Increase Police Staffing and Fight Our Panhandling Epidemic With Community Education**

Thank you for allowing me to speak today. And thank you Mayor Hales for your stated desire to focus on the city instead of re-election. My name is Fritz Jünker. I’ve lived in a condo four blocks from City Hall with my wife since 2007. I am speaking today out of concern for the safety of my family, friends and neighbors. Last Summer, as we all know, a man was stabbed to death by a drifter just steps from here. This terrified our neighborhood. Earlier this Summer, my wife was assaulted by a homeless man a block from our home. She’s now constantly afraid and on guard. Just weeks ago, a visiting friend was spit on and threatened by a panhandler who was displeased with not receiving change. My wife and I, our neighbors, and our friends have had innumerable other experiences with aggressive and criminal behavior from Portland’s increasing unsheltered populations and we have all reached our limit. As quoted recently in the Oregonian "*the next New York Times Article about Portland isn't going to be about how great our food and wine are.*"

For the last several years, I’ve watched with great frustration as our city has been allowed to become a destination for “lifestyle vagrancy”, unchecked drug activity, limitless street camping, aggressive panhandling, and other illegal and disruptive behavior that directly affects the safety and quality of life residents Downtown, and city-wide. Sadly, Portland is no longer a place where we can use public spaces without disruption, anxiety or fear. Recent efforts to temporarily displace this activity or label it as the bi-product of an “affordable housing” crisis are short sighted, misleading, and will not resolve the serious public safety issues we face as a city. Only after we restore basic rule of law can we then speak about affordable housing and other solutions not related to immediate public safety.

Every Summer, street kids, drug-users, and other “lifestyle vagrants” flock here in greater numbers to take advantage of the city’s hands-off ideology. They inundate our woefully understaffed Police force with increasingly brazen and illicit behavior, draw drug and gang activity into the region, and extract dollars, services, and compassion from resident populations of the homeless and mentally ill who really need it. This coming Spring, we must send a strong message to those who travel here or choose this lifestyle that Portland is not their anarchic utopia.

Some in this debate want to make those who are fed up with the lawless behavior of these populations to feel heartless. We are not heartless. It’s about behavior, *not* homelessness. Of course - there are people here in Portland who desperately need social services and deserve compassion. *But compassion that is misdirected helps no one.* To care for those who are legitimately in need, we must sort out those who abuse our collective kindness.

I speak today on behalf of a growing number of Portlanders who are very frustrated with the state of our city. We implore you to consider the following four solutions:

1. Properly staff our police force at FBI-recommended levels and pace staffing with population growth.
2. Drastically increase funding and exposure for the “Smart Change, Not Spare Change” campaign to educate Portlanders about the dangers of supporting panhandling.
3. Commission a neutral, 3rd party study of the true demographics of Portland’s unsheltered populations.
4. Draft stronger ordinances to allow better law enforcement response to these issues.

Thank you for your time.

