

From: [Shirlee Geiger](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: testimony on 5 resolutions on homelessness
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My adult son, Josef Baiddou, died this past August. He was diagnosed with Schizophrenia in 2007. He moved in and out of homes we provided for him, having some periods of stability, but always followed by periods of psychosis and life chaos. Starting in 2018, he rotated in and out of a county jail, always for misdemeanor problems related to his illness. When released from jail, he was especially vulnerable to self-medication with street drugs. He went through at least one rehabilitation program and was clear and well for a period after that. But he had no living options with easy access to the kinds of services that had helped him stay well -- regular sessions with a therapist and meetings for those who hear voices and experience psychosis, Despite lots of love and family support, he walked away from Probation conditions -- preferring homelessness and psychosis to the criminal justice system.

He was beaten and robbed repeatedly and lived in fear for much of his time on the streets. Still, he considered it less demeaning and threatening than jail

He was found floating in the Willamette River this summer. We had spoken by phone the day before. It is still not clear exactly what led to his death.

Because of my experience loving and trying to be of help to my son, I am not an advocate of the idea that the main or even primary problem with homelessness is a lack of shelter. Certainly that contributes. But my son had options for being housed. Stable housing alone was not an answer for him.

Homelessness is caused by different life circumstances for different individuals. From what I understand about Mayor Wheeler's plan, it comes at the complexity of the factors causing homelessness with an array of different proposals. The plan looks good to me. Of course, we would need to stay the course -- it would take a long time to put in place, and a continuing focus across multiple elections. I hope the citizenry of Portland, and its elected officials, will be able to stay the course.

I believe we can and MUST do better than offering our mentally ill citizens a choice between the trauma of jail and the brutality of a self-cited and homeless camp. I deeply appreciate the thoughtfulness of this plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

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