

From: [Daniel Fuller](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposition to mayor's proposal to ban camping on public property | Agenda #899-903 | October 26, 2022
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 6:41:53 AM

Re: City Council agenda item #901, Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Greetings. As a resident of Portland who has experienced both homelessness and mental health difficulties, I am writing to express my staunch opposition to Mayor Wheeler's proposal to ban camping on public property and create what are effectively concentration camps for the unhoused.

The mayor knows that Portland's existing ban on public camping is unenforceable and unconstitutional. He must also know that the "designated camping sites" in the current proposal will not withstand legal scrutiny under the Ninth Circuit's ruling in *Martin v. Boise*, since they do not provide indoor shelter.

Mayor Wheeler says that "criminalization [of homelessness] is not the point" as if saying so negates the fact that living unsheltered on the street would be effectively criminalized under his plan. The mayor's doublespeak obscures the real harms caused by enforced camp removals, which have been described as "psychological warfare" by people living on the streets,* and have directly contributed to attacks on unhoused people.**

Mayor Wheeler once campaigned on the promise to provide shelter to "every person living on Portland's streets".*** The deadline he gave himself to achieve this goal passed almost four years ago. If I believed that Mayor Wheeler and his staff were genuinely interested in ending the homelessness crisis this time around, I would urge them to follow the "Housing First" approach favored by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. They could also survey unhoused people themselves to learn what kinds of immediate services are most needed.

Unfortunately, I am unable to trust that the mayor is acting in good faith. The timing of the current proposal mere weeks before an election, combined with the lack of any dedicated funding or support from local service providers, leads me to conclude that Mayor Wheeler is merely hoping to stir up voters' latent fears about the unhoused in order to put his political opponents in a difficult spot where they have to go on the record either supporting more policing of poor people or appearing to condone the status quo.

Anyone with a hand in this transparent ploy to use unhoused people as political pawns should feel ashamed, and should immediately resign. Thank you.

Daniel Fuller
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* Alex Zielinski, "It's psychological warfare: Old Town Sweeps Hammer Portland's Homeless Population", *Portland Mercury*, June 17, 2022. Retrieved via <https://www.portlandmercury.com/Housing/2022/06/17/43222570/its-psychological-warfare-old-town-sweeps-hammer-portlands-homeless-population>

** Nicole Hayden, "Unhoused Portlander with no tent after city sweeps stabbed a dozen times in Old Town", *The Oregonian*, June 29, 2022. Retrieved via <https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2022/06/unhoused-portlander-with-no-tent-following-city-sweeps-stabbed-a-dozen-times-in-old-town.html>

*** Rachel Monahan, "Mayor Ted Wheeler Doubles Down on His Promise to Create Shelter Beds—And Adds a New Housing Pledge". *Willamette Week*, September 27, 2017. Retrieved via <https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2017/09/27/mayor-ted-wheeler-doubles-down-on-his-promise-to-create-shelter-beds/>