

From: [Danielle Klock](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
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October 25, 2022

My name is Danielle Klock, and my testimony is in response to agenda items 899-903.

I am the executive director of Operation Nightwatch Portland, which has been providing nighttime hospitality to Portland's unsheltered community for 40 years; I am the former executive director of Sisters of the Road and serve on the board of directors of Hygiene4All. During the summer of 2020 I worked at the Old Town C3PO village. Today, I speak for myself as a mother who has been watching their one and only child suffer on the streets of Portland for more than five years.

Before you ask why I do not house my son myself, I will share with you that even as the executive director of a local nonprofit organization, I do not make three times the average monthly rent required to qualify for a two-bedroom apartment here, and my son has a non-violent felony (which never would have occurred if he had been receiving the mental health, addiction, and supportive housing resources that I could not find), which excludes him from every property management company's housing eligibility requirements that I have seen.

I do not expect special privileges for my son. However, I would have thought that with the relationships I have developed since moving to Portland in 2016, that I would have found a way to get my son the coordinated care he requires for housing, medical, substance use and mental health disorders. I am well-connected and knowledgeable. And still, I have been unable to navigate this broken system to find the care my son needs. If I cannot find a path to housing (and healing) for my son, how is the average person living unsheltered supposed to do it?

Mr. Mayor, I listened closely to your proposed resolutions at your press conference on Friday. And I felt absolutely no sense of hope, relief, or confidence. On the contrary, I find your proposal to ban camping and ultimately force people into mass "campuses" short sighted, cruel, coercive, unenforceable, and frankly out of touch with the experiences of our unhoused neighbors and the people who have been working alongside them (and for them), to provide them with services and care. I am appalled at the way you and your supporters see unhoused people as a nameless, shapeless mass for whom you plan solutions "at scale." This is evident in how you spun the narrative during last Friday's press conference by saying that, "According to our hardworking City outreach workers... the majority of homeless individuals in our city said that they would not go to an indoor shelter for a variety of reasons. But they *would* go to an alternative location to pitch their tent where

they wouldn't be asked to move all the time, and many mentioned it would be nice to have access to a toilet. For many, designated outdoor camping with services would be a much better alternative than the status quo."

Mr. Mayor, what evidence do you have that your esteemed City outreach workers talked to the majority of unhoused Portlanders? What were the names of the people polled? Were their camps being swept as the question was asked? Were they asked specifically if they would feel safe in a tent camp with 125-500 other unsheltered residents where (from the 2019 Point in Time Count) around 38% struggle with mental illness, 37% manage substance use, and 25% confront chronic health conditions? How bold of you to pretend to represent the preferences of your unsheltered constituents whom you did not even consult on this matter. How "confident" you are in ignoring the multiple studies from PSU's HRAC - that **did** actually ask your unsheltered constituents about what alternatives to the status quo they would want.

During Friday's press conference you stated, "Our local providers are outstanding, but they haven't done programs like this at scale." You're right. We haven't and we won't. Because we know that individuals need individualized attention; they need **human scale** communities. We also know that enforcing a camping ban and coercing unhoused people into mass camps by threatening the "stick of fines" with one hand and the "carrot of diversion" with the other cannot work. We don't need mass-produced solutions; we need individualized care for each and every person.

My son is 24 and needs to have all of his teeth pulled. In May, his dominant thumb was partially amputated due to blood and bone infections he developed in just nine days from the time he was kicked out of the sober living program he had been assigned to by his probation officer. After his amputation I was able to get him into the Golden West, run by Central City Concern. While the Golden West provided a roof over my boy's head, he needed far more - a place that could administer medications to manage his mental health, a place that could provide medically supervised addiction treatment, as well as prepared meals to keep him at a healthy weight. Despite three separate multi-night stays in a detox center and my son **actively asking** to get into an inpatient drug rehab program, along with a Golden West social worker trying to move heaven and earth to find him an appropriate treatment bed, we were told there were none available to him. At the beginning of this month, my son's mental health left him feeling so unsafe in his room that he checked himself into Unity, pleading once more for someone to give him his medication and access to supervised, residential rehab. He was dismissed from the Golden West on October 9th. Tonight, as I write this testimony, I just received word that my boy is back at Unity asking them again for help that isn't available.

The dedicated staff at these places are frustrated as my son suffers due to the woeful lack of investment in the mental health and addiction recovery infrastructure our community

requires.

What makes you think that my son will get what he needs at an outdoor tent camp tasked with managing hundreds of people, many of whom have needs just as complex and acute as my son's?

It seems to me, Mr. Mayor, that your plans are little more than an attempt to disappear the unhoused people who live in our city. But your camping bans and mass camps will not hide the individuals in need of the most care among our unhoused loved ones. Your plan does not account for individuals like my son.

There are only two ways that you will not continue to see my son on the streets of Portland. I will either get help immediately to get him into a medically supervised inpatient drug rehabilitation program, or he *will* die. But I will not let you disappear him. I am attaching a photo of him to my testimony today, taken on September 18, 2022. I challenge you to look at that picture and try to forget the horror that you see. Each and every person out there on the streets of Portland is someone's loved one. I personally know and love so many of them.

As Gustavo Gutierrez said, "So you say you love the poor? Name them."

My son's name is Jet.

