

Robert Patterson

Remarks on the 2020 Census and Homelessness to the Portland City Council

February 13, 2019

Homeless people should be a protected class as we do not enjoy the full rights of US citizenship. One aspect in which this is alarmingly evident is the right to representation.

My name is Robert Patterson. I'm the director of Everyone Counts!, a Portland-based advocacy organization committed to equity in the 2020 census. One of our objectives is to count accurately every homeless person in the Portland metropolitan area on Census Day: April 1, 2020.

As we gear up toward 2020, I think it's important to look back at 2010. I want to thank Commissioner Fish for his outstanding leadership as co-chair of the local 2010 Complete Count Committee, and I hope to sit down with you soon for a debriefing of sorts on the successes of that committee and on opportunities for improvement.

We know that the Census Bureau, in an effort to save money, is planning for 2020 to be the first "digital" census. This increased reliance on automation especially when coupled with a reduced local presence brought about by Bureau plans to close half of its regional offices is extremely problematic. Now, more than ever, cities need to be able to count on federal consistency. In the words of Congressman Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-20), "Communities currently suffering economic anxiety cannot afford to lose federal resourcing due to a lack of Census accuracy."

The homeless do not have the same access to broadband internet as others, and this divide may leave hundreds of thousands uncounted nationally unless it is thoughtfully addressed. Our friends in Los Angeles have an interesting solution. They will be deploying "census action kiosks" which will provide broadband internet access to hard-to-count populations. Grant money exists for a similar program here and I believe that the kiosks could be repurposed after Census Day to be a lifeline for

the homeless as an early warning system for emergency communications and as a portal to vital social services.

I've recently spoken with Susan Bushore, Census Bureau Partnership Specialist for Portland, and she enthusiastically endorses the throwing of "Census parties" as a way to bring many hard-to-count individuals together in one (or multiple) locations so that they may be counted. These parties, as I see it, could also become social service fairs at which homeless individuals will connect with each other and important resources in a fun, safe, and pro-social manner.

Finally, Everyone Counts! has begun reaching out to local leaders, shelters, transitional housing providers, churches, soup kitchens, needle exchanges, street organizations, neighborhood associations, and ad hoc camping communities as we work to identify and prepare to count every homeless person in the region. We are working hard on a formal proposal, and next week I'll be traveling to Salem where I hope to meet with Census Project Manager Aldo Solano and other representatives from the Governor's office. We are lucky here in Portland to be home to Portland State University's Population Research Center, and Director Jason Jurjevich and analyst Charles Rynerson have been a great help in elucidating to me the complicated field of population studies. I look forward to their continued contributions.

I believe that, if properly executed, the 2020 census will provide an opportunity to bring the homeless in from the hinterlands, trailways, alleyways, and overpasses where we live and toward a future of dignity, agency, and representation.

We have fewer than 14 months to achieve our ambitious goals. Let's not miss a step.

Thank you.

PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION REQUEST
Wednesday Council Meeting 9:30 AM

Council Meeting Date: ~~Feb 30~~ Feb 13

Today's Date 12/14/18

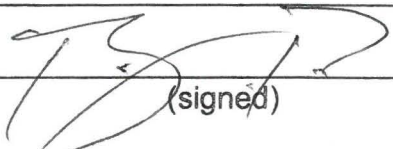
Name Robert Peterson

Address Homeless

Telephone N/A

Email emeraldjoh@gmail.com

Reason for the request: To address council regarding
~~Sex Workers Bill of Rights~~
Homelessness


(signed)

- Give your request in writing to the Council Clerk's office to schedule a date for your Communication. Use this form or email the information to the Council Clerk at the email address below.
- You will be placed on the Wednesday official Council Agenda as a "Communication." Communications are the first item on the Agenda and are taken at 9:30 a.m. A total of five Communications may be scheduled. Individuals must schedule their own Communication.
- You will have 3 minutes to speak and may also submit written testimony before or at the meeting. Communications allow the Council to hear issues that interest our citizens, but do not allow an opportunity for dialogue.

Thank you for being an active participant in your City government.

Contact Information:
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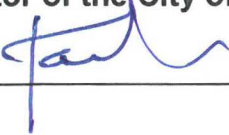
Request of Robert Patterson to address Council regarding homelessness
(Communication)

FEB 13 2019

PLACED ON FILE

Filed FEB 05 2019

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy

| COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS: | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------|
| | YEAS | NAYS |
| 1. Fritz | | |
| 2. Fish | | |
| 3. Hardesty | | |
| 4. Eudaly | | |
| Wheeler | | |