

OPINION

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address, and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond, or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is 10 a.m. Monday.

Love thy neighbor

To The Editor:

Please read the book "This Fight Is Our Fight," by U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren. "And it is our fight, all of us!" She tells us the truth! This country only works for those with "big money" to make it work for them!? I have been told by two political offices — a state senator, and a state representative — that prices are so high in Oregon because Oregon has become a "distorted supply and demand state."

And we are supposed to trust those we elect and what they do and say! I would just like to remind folks that God has never played favorites; he loves all his children equally. He works for the good of all *not just the favored few!* Oregon, please hear God's words. And I want to thank hugely all of the courageous special people who have given so much of themselves and have worked the front lines so hard for all of us, and for Sisters herself, during this nasty pandemic. I pray God to keep them all safe, and lift this virus that burdens us so. We need to listen to God's voice (Matt 5:43-46). We need to try to make a difference (all of us), in our own community, thereby leading the way for all communities. It has to start somewhere! Let Sisters lead the way — amen? Stand together as brothers and sisters in Christ! Care about one another: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

It's called "Unity," "United We Stand, Divided We Fall," "A Nation Without God, Will Die."

And thank you, Naomi Rowe, Lance

Trowbridge, Kiwanis, Shepherd's House, Bethlehem Inn, the Cold Weather Shelter, Sparrow Club, Furry Friends, and all the others who help so much. God loves all his children "equally." AMEN...

And thank you, too, Diane Goble! May others who care come forward and help make "affordable housing more affordable." (See: Bulletin editorial, "Stop making affordable housing less affordable city of Bend." December 3, 2020).

In His holy name,
C. Johnson



Secret Socialists...

To the Editor:

I just want to take a moment to thank Kris Calvin for his letter to the editor from last week's *Nugget*. Kris, I can't begin to tell you just what your letter meant to me, because I, too, am a secret Sisters Socialist and for weeks and weeks in *The Nugget* the Democrats have been vilified for just about everything imaginable. It's all about "patriots versus leftists," we're told.

So, it was nice to find out that there is a secretive Sisters Socialist Society and you have ping-pong and cookies, too! Count me in! Hey, I bet you guys could tell me how to get a crack pipe from the Biden administration. I hear they're giving them out for free!

Terry Weygandt



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Decriminalization is a social disaster

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Sometimes you know you've made a terrible mistake as soon as you take that first wrong turn.

Oregon took a sharp turn down the wrong road in passing Measure 110 — the Drug Decriminalization and Addiction Treatment Initiative approved by voters in 2020. Measure 110 makes personal possession of a controlled substance a violation subject only to a maximum fine of \$100, and established a drug addiction treatment and recovery program funded in part by the state's marijuana tax revenue and state prison savings.

Sheriff Shane Nelson decried the unintended consequences of the measure at a presentation to People's Rights Oregon 5 last month, and the evidence that his assessment is correct keeps piling up.

Emphasizing treatment over incarceration is the right way to go — but relying on drug users and addicts to decide that they want treatment is never going to work. Measure 110 relies on citations rather than arrest for "personal use" quantities of drugs — amounts that are not insubstantial. Evidence so far shows pretty conclusively that very few of those cited are getting a drug assessment and virtually nobody is getting treatment.

Just as opponents of the measure argued during the election, we are expecting people who are using extremely destructive, and, in the case of methamphetamine, profoundly mind-bending drugs to act as rational actors who can see what's best for them and seek it out. It's magical thinking. It's bad for society, but it's also a disaster for the people it's supposed to help.

Journalist and author Sam Quinones has it right: "It may be in fact extraordinarily damaging to people, not an act of benevolence, but an act of torment to the street," he said in an OPB interview. "Taking someone off the street using jail somehow to detox people — people are doing this across the country now — might be a more benevolent, more kind way of dealing with someone. Certainly just saying, well, you're on

the street and we've got you with these implements that are kind of misdemeanors or low-level felonies or maybe you have some stolen property or whatever, but we're going to leave you here and we're going to wait till you're ready for treatment; the idea that people need to be ready for treatment is an idea that's made completely obsolete by this meth."

A law promulgated with the best of intentions has gone awry. It's hurting everyone and helping no one.

A close friend of mine has a relative who is, at age 45, in the likely terminal throes of a lifelong addiction to hard drugs. He's been living off-and-on on the streets of a large city where a similar drug decriminalization policy is in effect. Currently, he abides in a 150-square-foot tiny home in a village, established by an agency for homeless residents. He has been using multiple drugs: Xanax, cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl, and currently has two charges outstanding with law enforcement. He suffers from multiple, severe health issues that have periodically required hospitalization.

He considers decriminalization a disaster. He says that the streets have become an open-air drug market and shooting gallery. And, he says, with enforcement for drug offenses dropping off, law enforcement is not responding to crimes involving addicts.

A law promulgated with the best of intentions has gone awry. It's hurting everyone and helping no one. As Sheriff Nelson stated in his presentation, "In order for something to work, enforcement has to be part of it."

Treatment **MUST** be available — and we must be willing to step up to provide resources for it. But treatment has to be mandatory and supervised, and the consequence of incarceration has to be in the equation. We can't afford to wait. Oregon must act to unwind Measure 110, and take a better road.

Sisters Weather Forecast

Wednesday February 16 • Partly Cloudy 49/29 	Thursday February 17 • Partly Cloudy 58/32 	Friday February 18 • Partly Cloudy 57/32 	Saturday February 19 • Partly Cloudy 55/33
Sunday February 20 • Partly Cloudy 45/30 	Monday February 21 Partly Cloudy 48/30 	Tuesday February 22 Partly Cloudy 51/29 	

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