

RESOLUTION ON “SEATTLE IS DYING”

drafted by Evan Clifthorne on 4/1/2019

proposed to the 36th District Democrats on the same

adopted on 4/17/2019 by the General Membership

In deference to the established moral and philosophical positions of the 36th District Democrats' Platform, Section IV in particular, and in accordance with our civic duty to disseminate truth based on **clearly observable conditions of fact**, let it hereby be known; that

WHEREAS WE, as a civic community, hold to the belief that **all human beings are equally deserving of love, life, liberty, and dignity** regardless of their circumstances; and

WHEREAS, our civic community has borne witness to the rising crisis of homelessness and poverty in the Seattle region, engaging directly in the public discourse concerning scientific surveys, political policies, societal studies, and funding feasibility; and

WHEREAS, individuals among us have themselves spent countless years working directly with human beings experiencing homelessness and poverty, and count many among our number who themselves have experienced such challenges; and

WHEREAS, the evidence is mathematically clear^[1] that the vast majority of those experiencing homelessness and poverty in our region were already living in our region prior to experiencing such challenges; and

WHEREAS, the evidence is discernibly clear that systemic and societal policy failures, rather than particular individual choices, are the leading predictors^[2] of homelessness and poverty in our region; and

WHEREAS, the evidence is observably clear that baseless conflation^[3] of homelessness and poverty with criminal activity, addiction^[4], and other mental health crises is a leading inhibitor to our region's consistent efforts to transition people OUT of these challenging circumstances; and

WHEREAS, these basic societal truths remain needlessly contested in the Seattle region owing, in part, to misleading, inaccurate, unprofessional, and amoral media coverage of the crisis; and

WHEREAS, the recent publication^[5] of a video piece titled “Seattle is Dying” further exacerbates these untruths through its fear-based framing, selective content, and editorial decisions^{[6][7][8][9][10]}; and

WHEREAS, the civic and societal damage^[11] that results from widespread media

fear-mongering can be easily predicted based on our collective past and present experiences as consumers of American media; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 36th District Democrats formally declares the recently-published video “Seattle is Dying” to be misleading, inaccurate, unprofessional, and morally bereft; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 36th District Executive Board shall provide copies of this resolution to the authors of the video, to the authors’ employer, to every candidate seeking our endorsement, to our elected State delegation, to each member of the Seattle and King County Councils, to the Mayor of Seattle and the King County Executive, and to the chairs of each Democratic legislative district organization whose boundaries include any portion of King County.

[1] the **2018 Count Us In Survey** found 83% were in Seattle, 11% in other Washington counties, and only 6% residing out of state. A digital copy of the report was accessed on 4/10/2019 at <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/> – notably, this reflects a decrease in the percentage of non-local respondents from the previous year. **The 2017 Count Us In report** found 77% were living in Seattle, 15% in other Washington counties, and 9% living out of state prior to experiencing homelessness.

[2] Though civic leaders and homelessness experts often diverge on matters of policy *responses*, there is far less (to little) contention among experts that **the root causes of homelessness are systemic issues**. There are multiple discernable patterns that are typically inter-connected, but nearly all can be attributed directly to a host of policy failures or to a lack of appropriate resources. The **Seattle City Council** has unanimously affirmed this point in numerous public forums, and **Mayor Jenny Durkan** has described these patterns in detail on the City’s website titled “The Roots of the Crisis” which was accessed on 4/10/2019 at <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/the-roots-of-the-crisis>.

[3] As reported in the **Seattle Times** following the (most recent) 2018 Count Us In report, “**it is inaccurate to pin King County’s homeless crisis just on substance abuse**.” The article goes on to point out that the chronically homeless account for only “about a quarter of King County’s homeless population” with “**more families with children than chronically homeless people**.” This article was accessed online on 4/10/2019 at <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/are-most-homeless-people-living-outside-because-of-drug-abuse/>

[4] Seattle and **King County Public Health** reported in a 2012 – 2017 Report that only one third of deaths among homeless populations were the result of substance overdose. The report was accessed on 4/10/2019 at <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/locations/homeless-health/healthcare-for-the-homeless>

[/~media/depts/health/homeless-health/healthcare-for-the-homeless/documents/medical-examiner-analysis-homeless-deaths.ashx](#)

[5] “Seattle is Dying” could be found online as of 4/10/2019 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpAi70WWBlw>

[6] Published by the **Seattle Times**: “As we vent over homelessness in our ‘jewel’ of a city, let’s not forget our shared humanity” accessed 4/10/2019 at <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/as-we-vent-over-homelessness-in-our-jewel-of-a-city-lets-not-forget-our-shared-humanity/>

[7] Published by **Crosscut**: “6 reasons why KOMO’s take on homelessness is the wrong one” accessed online at <https://crosscut.com/2019/03/6-reasons-why-komos-take-homelessness-wrong-one>

[8] Published by **The News Tribune**: “Seattle isn’t dying, but KOMO’s program is hurting efforts to combat homelessness” accessed on 4/10/2019 at <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article228386679.html>

[9] Published by **The Stranger**: “KOMO’s ‘Seattle Is Dying’ News Special Is Killing Me” accessed 4/10/2019 at <https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2019/03/18/39630856/komos-seattle-is-dying-news-special-is-killing-me>

[10] Published by **Real Change**: “KOMO asserts Seattle is dying with misery porn” accessed 4/10/2019 at <https://www.realchangenews.org/2019/03/20/komo-asserts-seattle-dying-misery-porn>; and also “Seattle is splitting, not dying” accessed at <https://www.realchangenews.org/2019/03/27/seattle-splitting-not-dying>

[11] Published in **Psychology Today**: “If It Bleeds, It Leads: Understanding Fear-Based Media” accessed online on 4/10/2019 at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/two-takes-depression/201106/if-it-bleeds-it-leads-understanding-fear-based-media>

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Additional Informational Resources:

→ #SeattleforAll Toolkit: accessed on 4/12/2019 at <https://tinyurl.com/yxc2sjaa>