

Seattle's Head Tax – Punishing Success

When I read the Seattle City Council passed the head tax 9-0, I was stunned. Although the original proposal called for a \$500 tax per employee, the Council voted “yes” to the reduced \$275 after the Mayor threatened to veto the original bill. The punitive tax will affect for-profit companies that gross at least \$20 million per year – about 3% of Seattle's corporations.

This is so wrong on so many levels. I don't even know how to wrap my head around something that punishes employers who actually create jobs, hire people and already pay millions into the city's and state's coffers. And where's all the money from the soda tax, pot tax and alcohol tax that's already coming in?

According to the advocates of the head tax, this new-found money is supposed to help the “homeless” – the current politically correct nomenclature.

But who defines “homelessness?” No doubt there are people who are “homeless” and just need a hand up. But are those really the majority of people on the streets? Or is the majority those who prefer not to work, live on the streets, and don't want to help themselves? Are people who choose to use drugs included? What about the mentally ill? It's a complex problem and we're led to believe an ineffective and inefficient government will use this money wisely.

According to the reports, this tax is supposed to raise at least \$20 million a year, \$13.2 million of which is supposed to be used to build 591 units of low-income housing over five years. Twenty-two percent will be used for emergency shelter, trash pickup, raises for service workers and other needs and,

of course, the always necessary two percent for "administration."

What does all this mean? Rooms? Apartments? Condos? Townhomes? Do these Left wing ideologues on the City Council truly believe you can take someone who defecates and urinates on the street and lives in a cardboard box, move them into a sheltered enclosure and this will turn their lives around? Really? Will these same people go out to Walmart and buy matching towels and sheets, pots, pans and cleaning supplies for these new abodes?

When my husband worked as an attorney in Seattle in the dependency court system, he knew about every shelter, food kitchen, drug program and charity available in the city. How many times did he see people walking out of one of the Catholic charities carrying loaves of bread only to turn around and feed that same bread to the pigeons on the street? Picking through bags of clothing they were given only to leave numerous items on the street to get soaked by the rain? There are countless shelters available throughout the city which have only one requirement – someone has to be clean and sober. Clearly, if you're on the street, and not mentally ill, you choose not to be clean and sober.

Being poor does not mean living like animals on the street. I've traveled around the world to over 60 countries and I have witnessed what it is to be poor. I have seen people working on the street – making cookies out of dirt and sugar. Yes, they were very poor, but they were working. They were not defecating or urinating in the street as you see in Seattle, NY and San Francisco. They were poor but they had dignity and self-respect.

Perhaps some will think I'm being harsh and unsympathetic. I have a great deal of sympathy for people who are in dire straits, but I will not misplace my compassion for people who choose a certain lifestyle and who make no attempt to help

themselves. In our work in dependency court, my husband and I have seen people at their worst. Some choose to survive; some do not. No amount of money thrown into government programs will make someone do something they don't want to do. The most successful drug programs we've witnessed in our 30 years of practice are 12-step programs – free to anyone who chooses to get clean. No money involved. Call me cynical, call me mean-spirited, call me uncaring. In far too many cases, “homelessness” is a choice. There I've said it.

This tax is about the Left wing's hatred of Jeff Bezos, head of Amazon, solely because he is a capitalist. Self-identified Socialist Council member, Kshama Sawant, had the audacity to comment on Jess Bezos's wealth: “There is no way this tax will be a burden on big businesses in Seattle.” How dare she proclaim what “burden” the wealthy will endure? Exactly how many jobs has she created compared to the 45,000 people who are employed by Amazon? What does Ms. Sawant think will happen to Seattle's economy if Mr. Bezos packed up Amazon and left the state (which I hope he does)? I'd like to know when was the last time she visited Venezuela – a beautiful country ruined by socialism – where surgeons now make \$6.00 a month.

I have no idea whether this head tax is constitutional or not. Whichever corporation sues to find out will be viewed by the hate-filled Left as demonic. Just look at the signs in the photo above – exactly where in the U.S. or State constitutions is “housing a human right.” Anyone who disagrees is the devil incarnate.

The Council's ordinance calls for the tax to end in five years, with renewal requiring a further vote in 2023. Two things are certain: the tax will never go away and punishing success will never cure “homelessness.”

I don't get it. If you do, God bless you.