



Stephen W. Christy
Supervisor, District 4

PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS


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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 9, 2022

TO: Melissa Manriquez
Clerk of the Board

FROM: Steve Christy
District 4 Supervisor 

SUBJECT: Agenda Addendum Item

Please place the following item on the Addendum to the Agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting of November 15, 2022:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tucson Crime Free Coalition

Discussion/Direction/Action regarding an update from the County Administrator on Pima County's efforts to develop a regional plan to reduce crime on the streets of our community, in support of the Tucson Crime Free Coalition's efforts. (District 4)

Pima County Board of Supervisors 10/18/22 Comments
Josh Jacobsen

Good morning Supervisors,

My name is Josh Jacobsen, I am a local restaurant operator, a Pima County Small Business Commissioner and a steering leader of the Tucson Crime Free Coalition.

I want to thank Chair Bronson, Supervisor Christy and County Administrator Leshner for their support of the Tucson Crime Free Coalition's efforts to develop a regional plan to reduce crime on the streets of our community.

The story of what business owners and citizens are facing on the streets of Tucson and Pima County begins with substance abuse, specifically fentanyl, where Pima County leads the state in overdose cases.

On a regular basis, my staff and I are cleaning up drug paraphernalia like tin foil with residue, straws used for smoking illegal substances, and sometimes needles. At our businesses, drug use on our properties, and in our bathrooms have become all too common. Our locations near bus stops are more affected because people get off the bus and need a place to use. Several times we have had to open bathroom doors to find people nodded off or force them to leave because they are smoking illegal substances. The smell permeates the area and it is one you will not forget. Last week we had one of our worst instances, a couple came into one of our locations, where they took turns smoking fentanyl in the bathroom, my staff was very upset because they had babies with them.

We are also dealing with vandalism, break ins, theft of our merchandise as well as our utilities. My staff tells me that they are dealing with the same issues in their neighborhoods. this did not used to be common, now it is becoming the norm. We have people that will urban camp on our properties at night, that includes having fires on our patios and defecating on our sidewalks. We are spending tens of thousands of dollars in repairs and security upgrades. I call these costs a CRIME TAX, and it is becoming one of our largest expenses.

Nearly everyday, we have to ask people to leave our premises, they become very aggressive towards us and even our customers. I personally have been assaulted and so has one of my managers. When customers feel unsafe it is terrible for business. Some of theses individuals are armed with weapons, which makes these situations even more dangerous. As an employer the safety of my staff and my customers is my number one priority, and currently my number one concern.

We have heard from countless people in our community that have endured the same types of scenarios I have described and worse. We are hearing from business owners that if things do not improve, they will be leaving the city, our region, or closing all together. This will not help Tucson as we go deeper into a recession with a 21% poverty rate.

We also received some very troubling information from our TPD contacts that they just had one of their worst months of attrition. We are down to 275 patrol officers. When my staff is dealing with dangerous individuals, there is a good chance TPD won't be able to respond.

I know that all of you can see what is happening in our community and as our elected leaders you want a solution as well.

Simply put, we need to help those that we can reach, but we also need to disrupt the lawless lifestyle that a relatively small amount of people are living on our streets. We need to put an end to the aggressive panhandling, urban camping, open drug use and all of the other illegal activities that follow. Much of this will have to be done through enforcement of our laws, but the message must be clear, this way of living will not be tolerated any longer.

We recognize this will be a monumental task and the need for a regional approach to solving this problem. That is why we need Pima County to take a leading role. Again, we thank you for your support as we work towards a meaningful solution that our community desperately needs.