

Ronda, I am Steven Schooler, the Executive Director of Porchlight, Inc. We are a non-profit agency that does work a great deal with the more challenging and challenged persons impacted by this ordinance. We strongly support it. I will not be able to register or be present for the ALRC hearing on this ordinance on November 18 but will be available for subsequent considerations either by the ALRC or by the Common Council.

Without elaborating in significant detail, substance abuse is a major issue in our community. A part of the problem involves those that have chronic substance issues and are either homeless or near homeless and both pan handle and consume alcohol in the downtown area. This is a quality of life and safety concern, not just for others, but for those that consume large amounts of alcohol on a daily basis. While there is no panacea for addiction, research does suggest that if it is more difficult for those with substance abuse issues to access the substances they are addicted to, there is a motivation to change. We, at Porchlight, with the help of the City, have outreach workers and potential housing, that may help these persons if they are so motivated to change. We are still working on the necessary treatment services, but having the outreach and potential housing is a start.

We believe that if policies are implemented that increase the difficulty to access alcohol combined with increased opportunities for stable housing and treatment, there is the opportunity for change in behavior that will ultimately save significant funds currently spent for police, ambulance, detoxification, jail and hospital services. In addition, these policy changes may actually work to help those that are so chronically addicted, they are destroying their own lives through their current substance abuse.

We believe that the habitual drunkard ban is a step in that direction.