



November 29, 2022

Tucson City Council  
255 W Alameda St  
Tucson AZ, 85701

Subj: Call to the Public

Dear Councilmember:

I am writing on behalf of the Goldwater Institute, a government watchdog and litigation organization, to express concerns regarding the homelessness crisis in Tucson.

As you know, the Pima County Board of Supervisors recently held a hearing to address its citizens' serious health and safety concerns and passed a series of unanimous, bipartisan motions. This is a welcome and critical first step, but the county cannot adequately resolve the underlying problem without the city's involvement, and Tucson citizens and county officials have told us that the city refuses to engage.

At the Pima County Board of Supervisors meeting, we heard from business owners who have had homeless people trespass onto and break into their property, steal from them, threaten their customers and employees with weapons and violence, and bring illegal drugs onto their premises. This situation has become dire, and it requires prompt attention.

Inaction isn't compassionate to business owners, and it isn't compassionate to people living on the street. Instead, it subjects everyone to dangerous and unsanitary conditions and threatens lives and livelihoods. It subjects the city and county to legal liability.

Phoenix residents are facing a similar situation: crime is rampant, businesses and livelihoods are being destroyed, and people's safety and well-being are threatened daily in a large area of the city known as "The Zone." Phoenix's inaction in The Zone has created a serious public nuisance, and the city is now in the midst of a lawsuit brought by a group of citizens and business owners, a case in which the Goldwater Institute is participating. Other cities, too—notably Seattle—have been subject to litigation due to similar failures by local officials to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens against nuisance encampments.

Hardworking Tucsonans deserve to have their public officials enforce the law and protect their rights, and they should be able to rely on the public services their tax dollars pay for. We urge you to work with the county and the public to provide solutions for the people you serve. We are happy to help you in this process in any way that we can.



If you have any questions or would like to discuss how the city can address this critical matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at [avanderheyden@goldwaterinstitute.org](mailto:avanderheyden@goldwaterinstitute.org) or (651) 262-4401.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Austin V.D.H.'.

Austin VanDerHeyden  
Municipal Affairs Liaison