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It's Past Time to Take Back San Diego from the Catastrophe of Homelessness

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A man sleeps next to trash cans in downtown San Diego. Photo by Chris Stone

San Diego (and our region) has been shamefully mismanaged over the past decade turning our streets, canyons, and public parks into ground zero in a raging homeless humanitarian crisis that is negatively impacting all of us.

In the face of this ongoing disaster, we recently authored [Sunbreak Ranch Is the Answer to San Diego — and America's — Homeless Crisis](#) in order to put forth a viable alternative path forward.

[Sunbreak Ranch](#) is about temporary emergency tent-cities, rehabilitation services, and enforcement.

We are desperate for a viable answer to this unrelenting humanitarian catastrophe with its accompanying devastation to every aspect of our lives, and culture.

Our article quickly drew significant positive nationwide attention in national news print outlets, and on top-ranked cable television news shows.

San Diego's elected officials, however, did not share this same enthusiasm or interest. Some even publicly summarily dismissed [Sunbreak Ranch](#) with callous indifference and vengeful spite, without any attempt to understand the concept, or reaching out to anyone to try to learn more.

To the contrary, not one of our elected officials have offered a viable alternative of their own.

Though several have actually proposed turning part of our city's crown jewel Balboa Park into homeless camping. [David Lundin of Love Balboa Park](#) accurately responded that doing so would be the "*taking of legally dedicated park lands within Balboa Park for a clearly inappropriate and illegal non-park use.*"

We are way beyond our outer limits of continuing these non-productive, shuffling games of musical chairs by our elected officials.

Today we are launching [Take Back San Diego](#) — a non-partisan, non-political grassroots coalition of native (and long-time) San Diegans who, in unison, are saying NO to the homeless status quo of the suffering of everyone of us.

In San Diego, the true (unreported) homeless numbers are likely significantly more than 20,000 in the city proper, and 45,000 countywide. (Across America the number is more than 580,000.)

Many of us can no longer walk or bicycle our streets, sidewalks, bike paths, and public parks without facing an obstacle course of tents, bodies, human excrement, needles, trash, and a slew of walking-zombies who are impossible to distinguish between those just down on their luck and others who are out-of-control substance abusers about to attack us.

Anarchy, chaos, and misery now define San Diego.

We are in the midst of the greatest humanitarian crisis we have ever faced.

We are also devolving into the economic self-destruction of our all important and inter-related hospitality and tourism industries.

In 2020, the number of homeless deaths in San Diego reached 357 persons.

[In 2022, deaths jumped to 574 persons.](#) This is an astonishing 61% increase in just two years...and, yet, those who can do something about all of this —won't.

To humanize this 574 number, think about the NFL Super Bowl with its one-hundred-yard long football field.

If we stand one person on every yard-line in a row down the field, we would have nearly six rows of 100 persons to represent how many homeless people died in just 2022.

Visualize these six lines of humanity stretched down the field.

These 574 persons are NOT just statistical numbers...they are individuals...our brothers and sisters...our sons and daughters...our mothers and fathers...our friends...our fellow citizens.

Something has gone terribly wrong in San Diego. We are here to [Take Back San Diego](#) and fix it. We have four achievable goals:

1. END THE HOMELESS HUMANITARIAN CRISIS THAT IS RAVAGING OUR STREETS, CANYONS, AND PUBLIC PARKS.

Despite what elected officials say, this is an achievable goal via a combination approach of [Sunbreak Ranch](#) as our region's central homeless triage location, coupled with the development of a [Real Time Shelter Dashboard](#). This dual approach will help save thousands of lives of our fellow citizens, as well as save billions of taxpayer dollars.

2. RETURN TO THE RULE OF LAW ON ALL OF OUR STREETS, CANYONS AND PUBLIC PARKS — AND ESTABLISH A FUTURE OF DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR ALL.

This is achievable once [Sunbreak Ranch](#) is operational, because "*Sunbreak will establish a clean, healthy, safe, and secure place for everyone in need*". This is the key ingredient to enable our return to the Rule of Law and establish a future of dignity and respect for all.

3. MAKE SAN DIEGO THE CLEANEST BIG CITY IN AMERICA.

San Diego was once one of the cleanest big cities in America, but now is disgustingly filthy beyond recognition. With the [Sunbreak Ranch](#) homeless triage location operational, matched with our return to the Rule of Law, making San Diego the cleanest big city in America will become a reality.

4. RETURN OUR STREETS, CANYONS, AND PUBLIC PARKS TO CLEAN, HEALTHY, SAFE, AND SECURE PLACES FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY.

By achieving our first three goals, this one will quickly fall into place.

We can't wait for others to wake up and lead us out of this crisis. San Diego is in a unique position to lead the way for itself, as well as illuminate the pathway forward for all big cities across our land.

[Sunbreak Ranch](#) is the answer.

We invite all San Diegans (and people everywhere) to join with us to [Take Back San Diego](#) in order to end this homeless humanitarian catastrophe.

All of our lives are literally hanging in the balance.

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