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QuickPoint! – Snowstorm Shows Taxpayers the City of Portland's Dystopian Side

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

Last week's snowstorm was more than a snow-pocalypse, it was a dystopian scene of the decline of Portland civil society.

The storm snuck up on all of us. Because it came so quickly and so hard, many drivers had to abandon their vehicles on the side of the road. In response, the City of Portland announced not only would it tow those cars, they'd also ticket the owners for abandoning them. The city made some people's worst day even worse.

The next day, I went out to walk my dog in 11 inches of snow only to discover my car had been stolen from my driveway in broad daylight.

My wife said, "Why don't the bad guys go after the abandoned cars?" It turns out they did. Many owners who had to leave their cars came back to find out they'd been vandalized and looted.

In the middle of the storm, the city opened the East Portland Community Center as a warming shelter. My friend who lives across the street from the center told me one night some of the folks who were warming up went over to the school next door, ripped the door off the sports supply shed, and looted it.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Taxes are the price of civilization." But Portlanders seem to be paying ever higher taxes and getting ever less civilization.

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

