

# Opinion: Panhandling in New Bedford continues to be a major problem

The following was sent to us from a reader:

“As soon as heroin/opioid addiction became an epidemic in New Bedford, panhandling became an epidemic. Hmmm, what does that tell you?

Panhandlers are everywhere in this damn city, and it's a nuisance. It's embarrassing to have out of town people visit. They qualify for section 8 and public housing before our veterans, disabled and elderly. They don't have to wait long because they are at the very top of the wait list. However, I've been seeing the same ones for years. Homeless, my ass.

As far as veterans, I feel for them, however, a lot of these panhandles dress like veterans and they really aren't. I know a few of them. I also saw a group of five people get out of a new BMW downtown and each took up a corner asking for money. Also, I saw a man downtown leave his corner, go behind the building I was in, and light up a crack pipe.

The mayor should make panhandling illegal. If you offer to bring them food, they say “I need and prefer the cash”. They are making more than me by standing near Market Basket. Market Basket has approximately 10,000 customers daily, especially on weekends. I looked it up when they went on strike. So if only a quarter of the people give them \$1.00, they walk away with \$2,500 that day. Insane. No wonder they rather stand there as a full time job, it pays more than all the entry level and moderate level jobs available. Panhandling requires no training or education. This needs to be stopped.”

Have an opinion you'd like to share? E-mail

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