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amenities in more affluent neighborhoods.

As one example, many middle-class families leave cities because of poor school quality. Mayors and others who care about the viability of a city should support school vouchers. That way, parents who stay — and put a high premium on the education of their children — wouldn't be faced with paying twice in order for their kids to get a good education, through property taxes and private school tuition. Some might protest that city service discrimination is unfair. I might agree, but it's even more unfair for cities, once the magnets of opportunities for low-income people, to become economic wastelands.

Big cities can be revitalized, but it's going to take mayors with guts to do what's necessary to reverse accumulative decay. They must ensure safe streets and safe schools. They must crack down on not only violent crimes but also petty crimes and misdemeanors, such as public urination, graffiti, vandalism, loitering and panhandling.

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