

DATE: February 27, 2017

TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Teresa Douglas, Member
Governor's Advisory Committee on DUII
Alcohol and Drug Evaluation Specialist

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2613

Chair Barker and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 2613 which expands the definition of DUII to include any drug that adversely affects a person's physical or mental faculties to a noticeable or perceptible degree.

As Oregon statutes currently stand, a person operating a motor vehicle under the influence of over the counter substances or other chemicals that are not listed in the statute, cannot be charged with DUII. Regardless of how dangerous their actions may be to themselves or other citizens on the roads, they do not fall under the current DUII statutes. Many of these other substances or combinations of substances have serious effects on a person's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. As the availability of these substances continues to increase, we will see more negative effects in society in general and on our roads.

As someone who works with DUII offenders daily, I have seen an increase in the abuse and misuse of non-controlled prescription drugs, over the counter drugs and the ever changing chemical compounds that can be purchased over the internet. Many of these chemicals are being abused by our youth because of their low cost and ease of use. One example is Diphenhydramine, a common ingredient in cold medicine. While these substances can produce intoxication, they are not included in the DUII statutes.

These offenders cannot be charged with DUII, which is a missed opportunity for intervention. With no legal consequences, these substance abusers are allowed to continue to place themselves and the public at continued risk. Treatment is an integral part of the DUII system and is an opportunity for change in the offender's life. The earlier we can address the substance abuse, the better the chances of recovery from addiction. Every offender that can break the cycle of addiction is a win for themselves, society and public safety.

As a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee, an Alcohol and Drug Evaluation Specialist and a public safety advocate, I would urge your support of HB 2613.