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February 5, 2020

To: Rep. John Lively, Chair
Rep. Julie Fahey, Vice-Chair
Rep. Carl Wilson, Vice-Chair
CC: Members of the House Economic Development Committee
Re: Testimony in Opposition to HB 4117

Good afternoon Chair Lively and Committee members. My name is Andrew Swanson and I'm the Policy and Advocacy Director for Oregon Recovers. I'm also a person in long term recovery from addiction to heroin, methamphetamine and alcohol.

Oregon Recovers is a coalition of people in recovery from addiction, our friends and family and the providers who provide critical and valued prevention, treatment and recovery support services. The mission of Oregon Recovers is to transform the existing fractured and incomplete addiction recovery system into a recovery-based, continuum of care which recognizes addiction as a chronic disease requiring a lifetime of support.

As Governor Brown publicly announced nearly two years ago, Oregon is locked in the throes of an unprecedented health crisis. According to the latest federal report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Oregon has the 3rd highest untreated addiction rate in the nation and ranks 47th in access to treatment. *Today alone, 5 people will die in alcohol-related deaths in Oregon, a rate 5 times higher than the number dying from all drug overdoses combined.*

The annual total of this carnage is the death of more than 2100 Oregonians. Comparatively, at the height of the AIDS epidemic in 1994, Oregon lost 362 people. Again, I would like to stress that alcohol is the single largest contributor to the addiction crisis in Oregon and is the third leading cause of preventable death in Oregon. Furthermore, alcohol-related deaths have increased nearly 35% in Oregon in the last 15 years and 50% of all alcohol sales in Oregon are consumed in binge drinking. A quarter of all Oregonians engage in binge drinking and over 20% of minors in Oregon engage in underage drinking, reducing the barriers to access will only add fuel to the fire.

The economic burden that alcohol puts on the taxpayers of Oregon is also important to take into account when considering this bill. Excessive alcohol use costs Oregon \$3.5 billion per year in lost workplace productivity, health care expenses, criminal justice costs and motor vehicle crashes, or, to put it another way, taxpayers are spending \$2.08 for every drink consumed in Oregon tonight.

We strongly oppose HB 4117 because this bill would make alcohol significantly easier for Oregonians to access. This is especially concerning with regard to underage drinking because studies identify the home delivery of alcohol in states where it is legal as an emerging source of alcohol among minors. Evidence from those states have demonstrated that there are major issues with delivery compliance. For example, one study shows that 20% of orders placed by minors were completed. The underage drinking rate in Oregon is already the 7th highest in the nation and evidence suggests that this bill would reinforce this endemic problem.

Lastly, two wrongs don't make a right. This bill was inspired by HB 2909, which legalized cannabis delivery in Oregon. Oregon Recovers believes that that legislation was misguided, and it does not justify legalizing the home delivery of a substance that is responsible for the deaths of nearly 2,000 Oregonians annually.

The state of Oregon must stop endorsing and encouraging the widespread consumption of alcohol if we ever expect to respond to the addiction crisis we are facing. The next generation deserves better. Please vote no on HB 4117.

For more information contact:

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