



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 755

March 2, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

Russell Lum

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee, I thank you for your attention on Measure 110 in the current legislative session. My name is Russell Lum and I am a political organizer for Oregon Nurses Association. We represent 15,000 nurses — including RNs and advanced practice nurses — and allied health workers. Oregon Nurses Association and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon urge you to maintain Measure 110 as a core priority and to fund the services encapsulated in it without delay.

ONA is proud to back the measure and its Senate Bill 755 which is a modest evolution/improvement on the effort. The reasoning for putting forward an improvement to the Drug Addiction and Recovery Act at this time is to make it more unambiguously consistent and robust in key areas where the broad coalition supporting Measure 110 has noticed opportunity to do so. Oregonians passed the measure by a 17-point margin. On this basis the legislature has ample reason to do its part and carry through clear voter intent into its most effective form as law.

ONA nurses see patients experiencing substance use disorder every day. Some of our members are providing addiction services.

As a general matter, our members are precisely in the position to see what brings people back to health, to see what works. This is true in substance use and behavioral health, and presently it is not subtle, but is in stark view with Oregon in an overdose crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the already bleak outcomes.

And what Oregon nurses see is that incarceration for drug offenses makes care harder. Attentive and compassionate treatment and support is what works. That, by necessity, working in tandem with enough services — and *the right services* — being available in a patient's care landscape. Oregon has long fallen short on this challenge and to embrace Ballot Measure 110 / SB 755 is to leap toward solving it. Please join Oregon nurses in support. Please join frontline health workers in seeing addiction as a health issue, and please be part of a 2021 Legislative Session that found the means to make the difference in patients' lives now. Thank you.