

To the House Behavioral Health and Senate Judiciary committees,

I know about the importance of drug treatment being available and accessible.

Several years ago a close family member had a substance use problem. He lied to the family and to his girlfriend about his addiction to cocaine. Once he got questioned by police after a purchase, but they believed him that he was just repaying some money he owed to the guy they saw, who was in fact his supplier. Maybe police believed him because he is a white guy.

Fortunately my family member wanted to deal with his substance use disorder. Additionally fortunate, he had some money saved up and, after informing his family and girlfriend, he enrolled himself into a private residential treatment facility. After successful treatment, he got his life back on track, finished college and married his girlfriend.

Many people with a drug problem are afraid to let anyone know about their addiction; they may want to get help, but don't have the money to enroll into private treatment. I was surprised to learn that Oregon was at the bottom of the state list for providing public treatment to its residents. Now, as a result of Measure 110, Oregon is at the top of the list for understanding that no one should be charged with a crime for personal use of any drugs. This will also address the disproportionate punishment of people of color and poor people. Oregon voters also understood that public treatment should be available and easily accessible to any drug user who wants it.

The Legislature must make sure that the funds are available without delay so that facilities around the state, in both cities and rural areas, can expand their drug treatment and other services to help everyone with substance use disorder who wants help. Pass SB 755.

Enthusiastically submitted,
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