



Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

My name is Emily McCadden, I'm a resident of Multnomah County, specifically Southeast Portland's Sunnyside neighborhood in Representative Nosse's district. I am a future social worker currently pursuing my master's in social work from PSU and I'm a member of my community's neighborhood association.

I know the importance of Measure 110 from the perspective of my academic, professional, and volunteer experience in my community, meeting people in recovery or who are actively dealing with substance use disorder. I also know the power of this legislation from my experience as a family member of several people with substance use disorders and from growing up in rural Maine, which is one of the ten states most impacted by the opioid epidemic. Specifically, I grew up in Washington County, which has Maine's highest rate of opioid addiction and death.

Both of my grandfathers and several uncles of mine have battled substance use disorders. These family members were not part of my life growing up because my parents and other family members responded to their loved ones' addictions by cutting them out of our lives. This response to substance use disorder certainly didn't solve anyone's problems - it left my parents traumatized and I can only imagine how painful this was for my family members who were struggling with substance use disorders. Deep shame and stigma in my community associated with substance use disorders meant that many families had stories like this. It was only as an adult, with the clarity of time and space, that I began to question why this response was so common in my community. I see now that it has to do with the internalized individualization of social problems. It's easier to blame an individual for their struggles than it is to critique the nameless, faceless carceral system that has seemingly always existed to punish "bad" people.

I know that another way is possible and I'm so excited that Oregonians see it too. Decriminalizing street drugs and increasing funding for treatment services is a move away from carceral logic that will save lives, reunite families, and set a precedent for the entire country to deconstruct notions of criminality associated with substance use. Thank you for honoring the humanity and worth of substance users by making this historic systems change that voters approved in November and voting yes on SB 755.

Sincerely,  
Emily McCadden