

Good morning,

My name is Priscilla Smith and I am a resident of Crook County. I write to you today because like so many others, I have family members affected by addiction and depression. I lost my youngest brother to a suicide after years of fighting his addictions to drugs and alcohol.

Like many physical conditions, addiction is an illness. Much like diabetes, heart conditions and cancer it needs care and treatment instead of the incarceration of those in its grip. Compassionate addiction treatment can be just as successful as treatment for other chronic conditions. When we lose even one person to addiction, that loss impacts all of us.

Statistics tell us that two out of three Oregonians know someone impacted by a substance use disorder. Our state is currently in a crisis only made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Often the loss of jobs and/or being cut off from family and friends have thrown people into severe depression, which can lead to drug and alcohol use, as well as suicides. OHA reports suicide deaths increased 70% during the past 12 months.

People recover from addiction every day and with long-term, individualized support, those in recovery can live long, healthy lives. The Drug Addiction Treatment & Recovery Act is a good first step in reversing the current treatment of these disorders. But it won't work unless we fund it. I encourage your support of SB 755.

Priscilla Smith
310 SE Juniper Ct.
Prineville, OR