

Submitter: Sasha Bartoo-Smith

On Behalf
Of: NAYA Action Fund

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation

Measure: SB1541

To: Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, Vice Chair Dembrow, Members of the
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementaiton

RE: Senate Bill 1541 – Oppose

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, Vice Chair Dembrow, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Sasha Bartoo-Smith, I have heritage from the Osage and Oneida Nations and I serve as staff of the NAYA Action Fund located in Portland, OR. Founded by the community, for the community, NAYA Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization with a mission to expand political advocacy and build electoral power in partnership with the Native community. The NAYA Action Fund provides tools to shape public policy, cultivate leadership, and elect champions for issues impacting Native people. Our vision of systemic change is youth centered, family driven, and elder guided. I'm testifying today in opposition to Senate Bill 1541.

It is no secret that the State of Oregon ranks as one of the last states for access to addiction services. If passed, SB 1541 would cut \$60 million a year from critical recovery and addiction services throughout Oregon. A report published by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission states, "in the 2017-2019 biennium, Oregon will spend an estimated \$470M on substance abuse prevention and treatment-related services, including prevention, screening and assessment, brief interventions, detoxification, residential, intensive outpatient, outpatient, medication-assisted treatment, primary care/hospital-based interventions, gambling treatment, and recovery and peer-delivered services." With the passage of Measure 110 in November 2020, it was clear that Oregon voters want the state to invest in addiction services. SB 1541 is counter productive to this measure.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, drug addiction among Natives is 300% higher than the national average. Studies suggest that there is a strong relationship between substance abuse and trauma. Our vulnerable communities including Black and Brown people, people in the queer community, disabled people and those living in a state of poverty or houselessness are at a disproportionately high risk of suffering the often lethal consequences of substance abuse. Culturally responsive addiction and recovery services like the Native American Rehabilitation Association are vital to the survivance of our people.

My family has a long history of addiction. I lost my first friend to an overdose when I

was 17 years old. Two weeks later my uncle fell to the same fate and I was absolutely heartbroken. I do not tell their story looking for sympathy as I know most of us have lost people that we love. I tell their story for the simple fact that their deaths could have been prevented. With the fentanyl crisis that's taken a hold on our state over the past few years and the rise in substance abuse during the pandemic, it is critical that we take action now to support those in our community who are struggling and need our help.

With the passage of SB 1541, it would continue to decrease vital addiction services for some of Oregon's most vulnerable populations. Oregon can do better, our communities deserve better, and that's why the NAYA Action Fund urges a NO vote on SB 1541.

Thank you,

Sasha Bartoo-Smith