

Chairs Lieber and Kropf, members of the Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response,

I am reaching out to you to call for real solutions, real safety, and real healing when it comes to addressing the overdose and addiction crisis. Leaders need to do more - and fast - to address the crisis in our community. They need to finally provide the housing, drug treatment, and mental health care that people need and voters have overwhelmingly supported. We also need to move beyond scare tactics and fear mongering. Controversial and divisive proposals to repeal Measure 110 are not the answer.

We shouldn't expect the police to solve social problems like mental illness, homelessness, or addiction — and we cannot arrest our way out of these problems. It's time for solutions that let mental health and drug treatment professionals help people who need and want treatment, reducing waiting lists and lines for detox services and not returning to the harmful war on drugs that disproportionately impacted Black and Brown Oregonians. I volunteer at Blanchet house and am trained as a peer mentor. I can tell you that jail/prison is not what these folks need. I have also volunteered in our prisons and heard from dozens of AICs that while prison gave them an opportunity to 'get clean' being in prison subjected them to a whole host of new traumatic experiences, which only drives their addiction deeper. Oregon has an opportunity to invest in long-term solutions and not just those that make these issues 'disappear' by sweeping people into the carceral system.

I understand the frustrations that Oregonians feel, and addiction is health issue that should be addressed as such. The solution to this is not a quick one. We must dig deep for the courage to stand for what is right and humane. No going backwards!

We know the real solution is to expand access to treatment services and I urge the committee to focus on helping and healing our communities. Please do not simply be swayed by emotions of others. We must make logical choices. Our humanity depends on it.

Sincerely,
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