

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

I'm Sher Griffin, a lived experience expert deeply committed to transformative social change. I firmly oppose the idea of re-criminalizing the possession of small amounts of drugs. Additionally, I reject the divisive and ineffective approaches adopted by all parties within Oregon's recovery systems. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) lacks the necessary capability and competence to manage funding and develop innovative programs. Their failure to acknowledge blind spots and create an inclusive and just environment for lived experience expertise has become evident, contributing to the systemic breakdown.

The current system is crumbling from various angles. Re-criminalization imposes inhumane treatment on those failed by the inequitable system. Conversely, not taking action risks more deaths and chaos in Oregon. The solution lies in moving towards transformative and restorative justice, involving the complete deconstruction of the existing system and initiating a fresh start without discarding valuable aspects. Acknowledging the complexity of addiction and recognizing the system as a root cause, we need increased funding for preventive, restorative, and regenerative measures. Communities should be empowered to address their issues through innovative and decentralized approaches.

Nepotism and corruption are widespread within the addiction recovery industrial complex. Recovery, as a restorative and regenerative process, should not involve elevating specific perspectives onto pedestals. The medical model tends to be narrow-minded, emphasizing its authority as of utmost importance—often rooted in fear. The Fentanyl epidemic in the US is a pressing issue, and Oregon's attempt to address it through a poorly timed and executed decriminalization measure has proven ineffective. The idea of sending individuals to Portugal is considered wasteful in terms of both money and time.

Within our community, there are numerous perspectives, innovative minds, and transformative leaders who have been sidelined. Why? Because we shed light on the blind spots, and those in power resist relinquishing control.

Sincerely,
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