

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

As someone with a partner, who is working tirelessly and relentlessly on the front lines of this crisis, I know how important it is, to prioritize care, not recriminalization.

Please instead look at increasing funding and support for critical community programs offered by places like Central City Concern, CODA, Bridges To Change, HRBR Clinic, New Season Recovery.

I am simply one of countless Oregonians, who love and care for someone who is in recovery, or has recovered from a serious, life-threatening, drug addiction. To think that the resources that can help change and save another life like theirs are being prioritized in favor of punishing people in need is staggering. Solving the complex problems of mental health, houseless, addiction, and more time, and the sooner we make steps in that direction, the sooner our community can begin to recover. Please, please prioritize care over criminalization.

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.

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.

I feel personally connected to this cause, but I am by no means the expert on it. Thank you in advance for everything you are doing to take in the voices of the people working at the crux of this drug crisis, and for charting a path forward.

Sincerely,
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