

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.

Criminalization never helps anyone, neither the people who suffer from addiction to those "on the outside", widening the already troubling divisiveness we're experiencing, treating medical conditions as crimes to be meted out to the "less acceptable ones".

The only winners are the police/military/secret police-related corporations that push privatization of prisons, making a killing off of people's suffering, cutting recovery and rehabilitation and cure, militarization of escalating brutal control of a population subset by the ruling class. This of course leads to the same corporations lobbying to make more activities more outlawed in order to increase prison populations even more. It aids the pushers of other, far more addictive and damaging drugs, like tobacco, alcohol, OTC and prescription potions by punishing their competition. And it helps secret police agencies, like the CIA, to keep certain drugs illegal, thus more lucrative, to fund even more covert terrorism against other countries, adding to their already too-high budgets, while taking the spoils of higher prices for imported drugs from "friendly" regimes. It also aids federal, state and local police by spending more tax dollars on arresting citizens for using the "wrong" drugs, procuring more military weaponry, and cowing people into accepting more surveillance, raids, SWAT tactics that equal the brutality of dictatorial regimes, etc. Oregon can learn a lot from Scandinavian and other more enlightened nations that treat addiction as the medical and class problem it really is. How many drug-dealing gang-related drive-bys, turf wars, executions have you read about occurring in those countries? Even Colombia, the biggest cocaine exporter in the world, Mexico and other nations have woken up and realize the damage done by "encouragement" from Washington's insane "War on (only certain) Drugs, and are amending their laws.

Far too many lives have been destroyed by terrible laws that target already marginalized races and classes of citizens.

The damage needs to stop right now.

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.

Sincerely,
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