

Hello, my name is Ben Sias. I live in NE Portland. I would like to make a few comments regarding the need to address changes to Measure 110. The original legislation was a good idea at the time, but it has proven to be very problematic. It is time to pivot. The existing law basically makes small amount of various street drugs legal. The only result has been a dramatic increase in both the number of people using these drugs and the amount of drugs on the street. Also there unfortunately has been very little funding for the both the number of social workers and facilities to help addicted people. This was initially the intent of Measure 110; to provide a public health solution to the drug problem instead of incarceration. This approach has been an abysmal failure. Therefore we need a two prong approach. We need to first repeal Measure 110 and make it illegal to possess or use ANY amount of hard drugs excluding marijuana. Users of small amounts should not be prosecuted however. Jail time will not solve the problem. And these users don't have the funds to pay fines. It just results in a revolving door or jail time and then back on the street. To solve this problem the legislature needs to provide funds to build and manage short term detention centers, basically like drunk tanks. The police should be allowed to take drug users off the street and put them into these detention centers. These drug users should then be provided counseling services to get them off the drugs and be required to go before a court on a daily and then weekly basis to make sure they are working on a prescribed program to solve their addiction problem. My understanding is that there was such program before the passage of Measure 110. I realize that this will cost money, but the county and city have the funds. I suggest using some of the funds allocated to the county from the Metro Supportive Housing Services bond measure. After all, spending funds to provide services to help people get off drugs will eventually help to keep them off the streets and from becoming homeless.

I appreciate the time to provide some comments on this issue.