

Dear Co-chairs Lieber and Kropf and Members of the Committee:

Oregonians deserve real healing, real safety, and real solutions to drug addiction and overdose deaths. Our leaders must do more to address the crisis in our communities, but regressing back to failed drug war policies is not the answer.

I have been studying drug policy for four decades now. It is clear that law enforcement has never been an effective solution and tends to backfire quite badly. Measure 110 on the other hand is a sensible step forward.

It's important to note however that M110 is only one step and that much more must be done, including the establishment of overdose prevention sites (also referred to as supervised consumption centers) and the provision of a legal safe supply of substances to people who use drugs.

The bottom line is this: a business-as-usual approach dominated by law enforcement will not solve any problems, rather it will just make things worse for all Oregonians. The only smart course is to decriminalize people who use drugs, allow establishment of safe spaces in which people can consume, provide a safe legally regulated supply, and decolonize our drug policies.

Criminal penalties for people suffering from addiction disproportionately jails Black and Brown Oregonians and hurts people who are struggling. Courts are not qualified to determine whether or not a person needs drug treatment, nor should we force people into treatment when they are not ready to be successful in their recovery.

We deserve real solutions. Oregonians need housing, drug treatment, and mental health care -- and the needs are urgent. We must expand services so that people who want mental health and drug treatment can get it, and we need to reduce waiting lists and lines for detox services.

Handcuffs and jail cells cannot solve behavioral and public health problems like mental illness, homelessness, or addiction. I urge the committee to focus on helping our communities with real solutions that help people heal.

Sincerely,

Doug McVay
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