

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

I offer this written testimony in service of supporting evidence based solutions to the addiction and overdose crisis in Oregon. As a former state and federal prosecutor, child welfare lawyer, criminal defense attorney, mother, and adult child of an alcoholic, and person in recovery, I have lived the struggle of addiction from a variety of perspectives. Both my academic knowledge and lived experience have convinced me beyond any doubt that we cannot arrest our way out of this crisis. Locking people up has never been a solution to a public health crisis and fentanyl doesn't change that fact. We need to do what we KNOW works and provide the housing, treatment, prevention outreach, harm reduction services, education, job training, and health care that people need and voters have overwhelmingly supported.

We also need to move beyond knee jerk reactions, politics, and fear mongering. The last thing we need to do is repeal Measure 110 and return to the war on drugs that disproportionately impacted Black and Brown Oregonians. The criminal punishment system can not solve problems like addiction, homelessness, and mental illness. We have defunded the systems that should be responding to and building resilience against these societal problems: systems of public health, early intervention, public education, affordable housing, community based prevention programs have been decimated as we have given more resources to police, prosecutors, parole and probation, specialty courts, and our ever growing network of jails and prisons that house our sick and make them sicker. It's time to stop funding the war on drugs and instead fund health and wellness based solutions that actually work and cost far less than police, courts, and prisons.

We know the real solution is to expand access to treatment, harm reduction, and prevention services and I urge the committee to focus on helping and healing our communities.

Sincerely,

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