



TO: Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

FROM: Kyndall Mason (she/her), Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon

DATE: 12/1/2023

RE: No on recriminalization. Yes on more treatment.

Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Kropf, and committee members,

I am writing on behalf of Basic Rights Oregon (BRO) to urge you to refrain from dragging our state back into the failed war on drugs, and instead continue to increase funding for desperately needed addiction recovery services, including culturally specific treatment options. As the state's longest-serving LGBTQ2SIA+ advocacy organization, we've seen how inequitable the impacts of drug criminalization inevitably are, and understand the need in our communities for more culturally informed recovery services.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, LGBTQ2SIA+ folks are [vastly overrepresented](#) in the United States' criminal justice system—and criminalization of drug possession plays a big role. We know the numbers are even worse specifically for our youth, trans folks and Black and brown folks. When arrests, courts and prisons are used as a solution to every societal ill, it is our communities who suffer and see their futures stolen.

On top of that, we also know that drug criminalization does not work to keep our communities safe and healthy—it didn't work for the decades of failed war on drug policies Oregon used before Measure 110, and we have no reason to expect it to suddenly work now. What does work is well-funded, culturally specific addiction recovery services. The problem is that there are not enough treatment services available—and criminalizing addiction will not solve that problem.

The goal of this committee's work should be to ensure everyone who seeks addiction recovery services in Oregon can receive them quickly, easily, and in a way that meets their unique needs.

According to the OHSU Oregon Substance Use Disorder Services Inventory & Gap Analysis, there is a 49% gap between the amount of substance disorder treatment that is needed and what is currently available in Oregon. The next steps are clear: Resist the old ways that have proven ineffective and harmful, and instead fully fund the services our state needs to heal from the ravages of an addiction epidemic.

Thank you,

Kyndall Mason (she/her)

Executive Director, Basic Rights Oregon