

Dear committee members,

I am writing today to urge your committee to work on repealing Measure 110.

I am an immigrant non-native English speaker who moved to Portland, Oregon in 1997. From the moment I arrived, I decided to get involved in my new city and pursue social justice for all our community members, including the underhoused and unhoused community members in Old Town in Portland.

It took me along a path of meeting amazing community members. Many of those folks suffered from different afflictions: mainly trauma, sometimes severe mental health issues and very often substance abuse. In the late 90s and through 2014, we saw the standard drugs affecting people in Old Town. There was nothing easy about those types of recoveries. The detoxing process was hard, physically and emotionally. Slowly, meth started taking over our streets, with horrendous violence outbursts. People who would walk in our day shelters started becoming increasingly more violent. Assaults on our staff and volunteer members became increasingly more common. Rage fueled outbursts would occasionally happen; we started seeing more deep psychosis. I remember one Summer in particular (2016) when we realized the transient Summer population was particularly affected by this ever growing in popularity drug. By 2019, highly potent meth became commonplace. Hooper's Detox center was struggling with a significant change in clientele from people dealing with alcohol intoxication to people going through meth psychosis. Staff were being violently assaulted. Then, all of a sudden fentanyl became the new drug we saw on the streets. Our houseless folks were in a state of stupor.

[Meanwhile, Medicaid waiver 1115 was about to be implemented. Med w.1115 is a demonstration waiver that is intended for people suffering from Substance Use Disorder (SUD).Coincidentally, measure 110 was promoted and voted in during the 2020 election cycle.]

As a provider to the houseless community who was daily at a direct outreach window all through 2020 and 2021, I saw the immense health decline in our houseless population as soon as BM 110 was implemented. Drug use became a commonplace event in our food line. People would free-base fentanyl while waiting for their food, in plain sight, with no fear of legal consequence. I started seeing people overdosing in line. I will spare you the amount of Narcan we have deployed, the many many lives I saw fading in front of my very own eyes. The young houseless people, whom I deeply loved, suddenly died from OD. The powerlessness of our law enforcement to guide them to mandatory treatment became heartbreaking for all of us service providers and police. The amount of deaths we have witnessed in the past 3 years is close to unimaginable. We are watching mass murder in our community. And we have no ability to help, just witness misery.

BM 110 was passed with no foresight. The advocates saying that we should "not criminalize drug use" do not understand that **NOONE WANTS TO CRIMINALIZE** a health condition. We want to make sure people have the chance at (mandatory) detox, which is the **ONLY** gate to rehab for most people. Free will disappears when hard drugs step in; the only way to alter the course is to **MANDATE DETOX**.

After burying more folks suffering from SUD than my mind allows me to comprehend, I urge you to **REPEAL 110** and start from scratch, develop a system that is functional at onset:

- with mandatory detox,
- available detox centers,
- rehab options for all suffering from SUD

- transitional sober living with wrap-around service,
- psychiatric care for the community members suffering from mental health conditions that can only be treated in hospital based settings,
- trauma care and counseling for SUD patients

The urgency should be put on a functional system of care that can hit the ground running.

Please, consider the experience of people who know the folks suffering from SUD and have been by their side for decades. Please, trust our lived experience and do not let short sighted ideas detract you from the immense moral responsibility which is yours. All the dead had loved ones. They mattered to someone. They're NOT animals in an experimental lab. They have human dignity and deserve protection.

Best regards,

Corinne Frechette
Portland, Oregon