

Dear Lawmakers,

Measure 110 has directly led to thousands of people becoming further and further from help as they slip into worse and worse addiction. I live in Portland and there are addicts living on the street everywhere. Most recently living in tents near my house on Glisan and 76th NE. Of course the cash cow of downtown is affected too. I recently went downtown to hear some music at the Jack London Review on 4th Ave. and it was hellish - drug zombies everywhere and of course trash strewn about. I wondered if my car would still be there when I got out.

When this measure was passed by the voters, I wondered if any of them had ever met an addict. I've had a lot of friends who were addicts and none of them ever got help on their own...they were pressured into it by friends and family. Or they were forced to deal with it when they were arrested or got into some kind of legal trouble. And even then when they got help, they failed over and over again until some of them died, or others finally got clean and stayed clean. Oregon has normalized drug use and we're going to see more and more young people slip into addiction and be lost entirely. Once it gets bad only a small percentage of people can be saved. Most are lost forever.

The problem with measure 110 is that we have almost no addiction treatment in Oregon and the mental health system is almost the worst in the country. You are in a position to help with both of those things...but that's a very long term project. It will take at least 50 years to have any kind of effect in Oregon even if you begin to fund it today. Letting people use hard drugs without any kind of social push back is just giving up. It sends a very bad message to young people, and of course it encourages drug dealers as they make thousands of dollars and become firmly entrenched.

We need to do the following

1. Make it easier to force people into mental health and drug treatment. This includes reversing measure 110 and allowing cops to intervene when people are doing drugs in public, driving intoxicated, abusing others as a result of their addiction. Changing the law to threaten people with jail would allow us to coerce them into drug treatment, and allow drug courts to mandate that they do this in lieu of jail. A few people might be turned around this way.
2. Create state mental health hospitals that function and that are not an embarrassment. The state hospital is a disaster. And we need more than one - we need a LOT of them. Meth and fentanyl are very powerful drugs and they destroy a person's mental health. And of course there are LOTS of people in Oregon who have other serious mental health problems unrelated to drugs.
3. Create evidence based addiction treatment centers that poor people can access. Don't just allow a bunch of well-meaning non profits to soak up public funds, but only fund people/organizations/doctors who have a proven track record. And for God's sake - build in some accountability.

Oregon is not a populous or wealthy state. We cannot afford to attract more and more addicts to further destroy Portland and other cities.

I'm currently visiting the east coast. Haven't seen one drug addict bent over about to fall down. I haven't seen one tent encampment with trash or one bombed out RV. They do a much better job over here and it's because of better policy, better law enforcement, better judges.

We can change things and we must. Real progressives don't just virtue signal - they actually make things better. Please fix the mess that that voters and activists passed.

Thank you,
Deborah Crohn