

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.

Users: the over use of legal and illegal drugs is mostly due to causes such as an illness or horrific circumstances in their life...domestic violence, traumatic incidences (war, homelessness, etc). The "pushers" should be the folk who are punished.

Fern Wilgus  
Brain Injury advocate  
Trauma & PTSD survivor

Criminal penalties for people suffering from addiction disproportionately jail Black and Brown Oregonians and hurt 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,

Fern Wilgus  
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