

Chair Lieber, Chair Kropf, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Hollie Oakes-Miller, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of AFT-Oregon. Our labor federation has thousands of public university and community college faculty, instructors, classified staff, graduate employees, researchers, and more within its membership. I'm the Vice President of Political Action and a geology instructor at Portland Community College.

Our Political and Legislative Affairs Rapid Decision Committee voted unanimously in support of joining ACLU and community partners in asking the committee to continue the path of real solutions and avoid the real harms of criminalization.

According to the OHSU Oregon Substance Use Disorder Services Inventory & Gap Analysis, there are significant and viable investments which need to be made to address addiction and community safety. This includes:

- 49% gap between total amount of substance disorder treatment needed to address the moment verses the current capacity.
- 50% of substance use service providers report not having enough capacity to meet their demand.
- 51% gap between the number of healthcare providers authorized to prescribe buprenorphine, a lifesaving opioid addiction treatment medication, and what is needed.

The situation has become dire for those who have language needs, who are living outside stable housing, and the long wait lists and denials of service result in cycles of despair and feed into a lack of community health and safety.

**Our federation of education professionals call on leaders to do more – and fast – that address root issues of this crisis.** Oregon needs to provide stable permanent housing, drug treatment, and mental healthcare. This is what voters supported when we passed Measure 110.

The goal of the committee's work should be to ensure that everyone who seeks addiction recovery can receive them quickly, easily, and in a way that meets their unique needs – especially for Black, Latino/a, Indigenous, and other communities of color, in addition to LGBTQ+ and disabled community members.

**Policing and re-criminalizing will not solve widespread social determinants like homelessness, mental illness, and addiction.** The "War on Drugs" has a shameful past. We cannot arrest our way to stable housing and healthy communities. Jail is not recovery. We know that harsh drug laws don't prevent drug use and addiction: 32 states have higher overdose rates than Oregon, and all of them have harsher drug laws.

**The problem is that there are not enough treatment services available. Criminalizing addiction will not solve that problem.** It will make things worse and increase the suffering that education professionals see on our streets and in our schools.

We want to thank the committee for the thoughtful approach you are taking in addressing the addiction crisis in our state, looking at the entire system and the dire needs in our community.

Sincerely,

Hollie Oakes-Miller, Vice President for Political Action  
American Federation of Teachers - Oregon