

Jon Epstein  
[Jonepstein33@gmail.com](mailto:Jonepstein33@gmail.com)  
Washington County 97229

All the air in this debate is going to the topic of incarceration and coerced treatment. This is important. But I ask the committee to not leave two (interrelated) matters on the sideline, which will never get the press, lobby, etc. that the other topics do. Responsible leadership and treating this properly as a public health issue demand attention to these:

- 1) We must invest in primary prevention or no matter what we do we will never ever get out of this cycle. Treatment is not the cure, prevention is.
- 2) Youth harms are growing faster than any other age group. If they don't die today from illicit fentanyl, they end up in dependency and part of the future burden. We need youth tailored efforts: awareness, education, prevention, mental health access, interventions, adolescent treatment.

These items can be properly addressed almost independently of the big carceral debates. They can and should happen right off the top. Create the right accountability, structure, and funding system to focus on youth substance use, prevention, & treatment.

Thank you.