

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.

As a future social worker and current MSW student, as well as long time resident of Oregon, I see the devastation that drugs have caused many of our communities. However, I have also seen first hand through professional experience and members of my community, that incarceration and other punitive measures do not fix or solve problems, but rather add to and compound other existing contributors to addiction. Oregon residents deserve care, compassion, and respect for resources to create positive and sustainable change - repealing measure 110 would not contribute to any of our communities actual needs.

Criminal penalties for people suffering from addiction disproportionately jails Black and Brown Oregonians and hurts 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,

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