

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.

I am the child of convicted felons who struggle with substance abuse and have seen firsthand what it looks like to navigate life and society with the stigma and criminal convictions that restrict success and access to necessities like housing and employment as well as responsive health services.

I am also a Master of Social Work student and a homeowner in SE Salem who cares very much about our communities and the urgent needs that haven't been given sufficient time and attention. Please join me in becoming part of the solution that centers the dignity and worth of human beings by addressing the lack of necessities like housing, mental health, and substance abuse treatment. I've personally seen from numerous angles how ineffective criminalization is. It's time we right the ship and stay the course.

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,

Lacey Bolduc
1234 Heather Ln SE
Salem, OR 97302