

## **Normalize Treatment, Not Use**

Chair Lieber, Chair Kropf, committee members,

My name is Keith Wilson, and I am the President and CEO of Titan Freight Systems and a member of the Downtown Portland Behavior Health Task Force, the group for which I am speaking to you on behalf of today.

I recently traveled to Portugal and the Netherlands, which, besides Oregon, are the only other drug decriminalization jurisdictions in the world, to collaborate with their health leaders, law enforcement, social workers, and politicians to compare the three programs.

I have a crucial observation: even with decriminalization, Portuguese and Dutch authorities prioritize the confiscation of hard drugs in open use. Oregon's law enforcement agencies, unfortunately, do not.

If I could advise this committee to do one thing, it would be to provide our law enforcement the power to confiscate all drugs that are openly used.

In Portugal and the Netherlands, if a police officer sees the open use of hard drugs, their laws empower the officer to seize the drugs immediately. The most important message they send to their community is that open drug use will not be tolerated.

Specifically, in the Netherlands, when an officer is confiscating hard drugs, they will do one of three things:

- 1) If a personal use amount, they document the user's name and send them on their way.
  - a. They won't even cite the person.
- 2) If a misdemeanor amount, they provide a citation and fine.
- 3) If a felony amount, the user is arrested.

The result of this process is that you will be hard-pressed to find any drugs being used openly in the Netherlands or Portugal.

Which is the opposite of what you find in Oregon.

There has rarely been a walk in Downtown Portland where I haven't seen someone smoking from a piece of tin foil or plunging a needle into their arm or thigh. Nobody, especially kids, should have to witness the tragedy of open drug use on their way to school or the playground. Unfortunately, this tragedy has been normalized and is an all-too-common occurrence in my city.

Please change our laws to enable our police to actively participate in reducing the open use of drugs in our community.