

Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Testimony opposing reverting to a criminal approach to Oregon's addiction crisis

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. My name is Mariana Garcia Medina, and I work for the ACLU of Oregon, but am sharing personal thoughts at this moment and not a statement on behalf of the ACLU of Oregon. I am a resident of Tigard, Oregon.

As someone whose brother was formerly incarcerated, I can attest that the impact and ripple effects of incarceration go far beyond one person at one time. They extend to their loved ones and community, and for much longer post-incarceration.

Drug addiction is a public health issue. We know punitive criminal approaches do not work nor do they make our communities safer. Instead, they have devastated communities.

By reverting to criminalization, instead of supporting people dealing with addiction, their families and communities, we will be extending a cycle of harm. We have seen this cycle with the War on Drugs, that especially targeted Black and Brown communities, many who are still experiencing the harm and impacts today.

I urge you to oppose reverting to any criminal approach to Oregon's addiction crisis and instead, to focus on making our communities better for all Oregonians by investing in drug treatment, housing, affordable health care, and education.

Respectfully,
Mariana Garcia Medina