

Chairs Lieber and Kropf, members of the committee, for the record, my name is Nicole Rooney, I'm a social work student in Portland and policy intern at Unite Oregon. I'm the daughter of a mother who died as a direct result of her addiction and a drug user myself. I'm here today to remind the committee of the broader context of the issues we are discussing today and more importantly, of the humanity of those who choose to use substances. Addiction research continues to show that the misuse of substances is directly correlated with exposure to adverse childhood experiences and the unmet needs in the present. The discourse focused on treatment and punishment is ineffective if our goals are to solve the issues in the long term. What we need is better infrastructure for housing, healthcare, and mental health treatment, not a revolving door into the criminal justice system that currently exists today. Measure 110 is the first step in shifting how we treat and view addiction and it's absolutely necessary for us to protect this measure in its entirety. By taking action such as prohibiting public use, we are further stigmatizing and harming users and those struggling with addiction. There are immediate challenges that must be dealt with but our response must be with compassionate wraparound services instead of punitive measures, which perpetuates the cycle of incarceration and poverty.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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Pronouns: they/them

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