

Dear Joint Interim Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Responses:

I am a criminal justice consultant and have worked for over 25 years with jurisdictions across the country to help their criminal justice systems implement more effective and evidence-based solutions to improve the outcomes for people who are system involved. I am also a resident of Portland, Oregon and am alarmed at the calls for recriminalizing substance use disorder (SUD). Oregon's M110 led the nation in recognizing that SUD is a medical issue, not one that the criminal justice system is equipped to address. Oregon's failure to properly fund and build a structure to provide access to care for those people suffering from SUD is not a valid reason to roll back M110. The state's implementation failure has fed the development of a false narrative that Oregon is experiencing increased crime, which is not supported by the state's own data

(<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.oregon.gov%2Fosp%2Fpages%2Funiform-crime-reporting-data.aspx&data=05%7C01%7CJACSR.exhibits%40oregonlegislature.gov%7C273c6a3894ad4b6d196b08dbf5f567e1%7C489a9c84574a48c7b72a2450511334cc%7C1%7C0%7C638374207214134725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoic%7C%7C&sdata=7mwqR8ic%2FmTh%2FGyQ125%2FbLMJugGEbMmeIE8jlTuy5o%3D&reserved=0>).

The criminal justice system, including judges, prosecutors, probation officers, sheriffs, etc. are not qualified to make health care or behavioral health care decisions for people. The research is clear that a criminal justice response leads to poorer outcomes—every hour that a person spends in jail increases their rate of failure upon release, exacerbates poverty, increases homelessness and unemployment, and increases the risk of overdose

(<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.arnoldventures.org%2Fstories%2Fthe-longer-you-spend-in-pretrial-detention-the-poorer-outcomes-you-have&data=05%7C01%7CJACSR.exhibits%40oregonlegislature.gov%7C273c6a3894ad4b6d196b08dbf5f567e1%7C489a9c84574a48c7b72a2450511334cc%7C1%7C0%7C638374207214134725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoic%7C%7C&sdata=niGAF%2B6Disfi2mU2ISV4fP38gb6pgVzd7m2exsR%2B9oc%3D&reserved=0>).

Oregon must find a solution to providing a robust continuum of easily accessible SUD, MH, and healthcare treatment in the community. There are jurisdictions around the country who are having success with providing a better continuum of care outside of the criminal justice system. Oregon should learn from those jurisdictions and take a leadership role in this work, creating innovative solutions that help save the lives of those in crisis.

I urge the committee to reject calls to return to the failed “war on drugs” that has proven over and over to have actually increased poverty and criminality, and instead focus on helping our communities with real solutions that help people heal. Thank you for taking a thoughtful approach to this complex issue.

Sincerely,

Lore Joplin

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