

Dear Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response,

I'm writing to you today in support of Measure 110, because we know that the recriminalization of drug use will only exacerbate our drug crisis. We all heard in Monday's hearing that our communities need real solutions, real safety, and real healing when it comes to addressing the overdose and addiction crisis.

I was part of the push for measure 110 before Oregonians voted yes to trying a new approach. I voted yes. Then I spent the last 2.5 years working as a behavioral health specialist in substance abuse at the outpatient level and I burned out quickly because the need is so great and the support is so lacking.

Additionally, I witnessed as a citizen of Portland metro, how measure 110 on its own, was yielding less than desirable outcomes and wondered if I'd made a mistake in supporting decriminalisation.

Addiction is complex. There are many factors that contribute to substance abuse and what we're witnessing in our community... measure 110 alone, can't address them all!

Measure 110 is being scapegoated. The world, only 3 years ago, experienced a pandemic that left many jobless, houseless and traumatized following loss of family to covid and/or resulting social strife. At the same time, fentanyl became more accessible than therapy and stable support services that could meet the increase in the level of social need.

What we are witnessing in our streets today does not represent a failure of measure 110... we are witnessing a failure in social systems at large.

Unaffordable housing drives folks into the streets where their struggles become public displays. A lack of mental health providers to meet the need has people wait listed several months leading to consumption of more crisis care resources (ambulances/ERs) as their mental health issues worsen and escalate abuse. A lack of available Inpatient beds means people are again, wait listed meaning their motivation has plenty of time to waiver and circumstances to worsen, driving folks to lose hope and go all in on use. And I could keep going on failures of the system.

Since Covid, it has gotten harder to get by and the vulnerable who've suffered dysfunction in their lives without the tools or supports to effectively process it have become the scapegoats, victims, survivors and Canary's in the coal mine letting us know as a society, we need to do more, not less.

Keep measure 110 and improve it!

I urge you to reject calls to return to the failed War on Drugs that stole the futures of so many Black and Brown Oregonians. We have the opportunity to do better and we must do better. We cannot wait.

Sincerely,

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