

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Kropf, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

I am submitting this public comment to show my support for rapidly expanding addiction services and to oppose misguided attempts to recriminalize drugs and mandate treatment in Oregon.

I am a retired criminal defense lawyer who spent many years defending people charged with drug offenses. Most needed ready access to treatment, not jail and a criminal conviction.

Calls to recriminalize drugs, mandate treatment, and repeal Measure 110 are not the answer, and will only make things worse. We can't arrest our way out of this.

Instead, effective solutions are urgently needed now. It's time for legislators to focus on real solutions that invest in communities, so we all have the resources we need. Decriminalizing drugs is only one part of the solution for building healthier communities, but we must also invest in:

- more addiction services, including treatment;
- rapid response behavioral health services and workers on our streets;
- resources for local communities;
- accessible housing and shelter;
- and overdose prevention centers.

Healthy communities are possible if we work together to create the systems and services people need to improve their lives and meet their urgent needs, rather than punishing them. I hope you will do the right thing.

Sincerely,

James Arneson