



Representative Bobby Levy

Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties

Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Goodwin, Vice Chair Nelson and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Bobby Levy and I represent House District 58.

Since 2019, opioid related deaths have increased, showing no signs of slowly down. As of 2021, there are an estimated 1,500 deaths due to opioid use. That is the number that has been reported. The actual number will never be properly determined for many reasons. What we are witnessing in our state is unacceptable. Measure 110, which made Oregon the first state to decriminalize personal possession of narcotics, was meant to direct the funds no longer used by law enforcement to be used to fund programs for the purpose of rehabilitating opioid users. As we have seen, less than 1% of opioid users have made the decision to be placed in said programs.

HB 2395, would mandate a study on substance use with findings to be submitted no later than Sept. 15, 2024. Opioid substance abuse is a major public health concern in the United States. Understanding the causes and impacts of opioid abuse is essential to prevent further misuse, addiction, and death. Studying opioid substance abuse helps identify risk factors for those at risk and solutions for effective prevention and intervention, as well as treatment strategies that actually work. In order to properly study substance abuse, researchers must have access to reliable data on the behaviors of abuse, as well as information regarding activities, genetics, and environmental factors that are thought to increase or reduce the risk of substance abuse. Additionally, researchers may need to analyze existing data such as academic or administrative records.

This bill is personal for me and for my district, House District 58. We have lost many young adults and teenagers due to opioid overdoses in recent days. I am passionate about this issue because I know that these deaths are completely preventable. The losses that families in our communities are suffering are unnecessary and unacceptable. We cannot let opioids kill the youth of this great nation. We need to fight for the lives of those being targeted by these despicable drugs.

Best,

Rep. Bobby Levy, HD 58