

February 2, 2023

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brittny Raine and I am one of the co-founders and Co-Executive Directors of a small grassroots nonprofit called Community Outreach through Radical Empowerment (CORE) in Lane County. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony, on behalf of CORE, **in opposition of HB 2089.**

HB 2089 undermines the will of the voters and creates a great deal of uncertainty for providers working on the ground every day to save lives and keep people safe. Further, the way that Measure 110 funding is awarded means that culturally-specific organizations and smaller agencies like CORE are finally able to offer more services to people in their first language, and by someone who understands their culture. Addressing health disparities in addiction treatment available to marginalized communities is an essential part of Measure 110. I find it disheartening that some would find it appropriate to take away vital funding from this cause.

CORE is an agency that specifically works with youth and young adults in Lane County. CORE is a recipient of Measure 110 dollars. We only received BHRN funds this past fall, but I can tell you that during the amount of time we have had access to these funds we have been able to:

- Assisted CORE program participants with in move in assistance to secure their own units;
- Paid fees, back-dated rent to keep participants safely housed;
- Assist in vital document recoveries, including paying for participants to get their
- licenses or other replacement IDs so that they can apply for housing and employment;
- Began the process of starting an expungement clinic to help our clients remove
- old charges from their records that have created often insurmountable barriers to
- getting a job, renting an apartment, or even applying for certain professional
- Licenses;
- Provided transportation assistance; to get to and from work/school, medical appointments, etc.
- Help provide funds for education endeavors and vocational training
- Given out hundreds of doses of naloxone, fentanyl test strips and other critical
- survival supplies;
- Provide a safe space for young people who use drugs to explore their recovery options and life goals without judgment.

I think it's important for you to understand that CORE is guided by the concept of "radical empowerment," a belief that young people are the experts in their own lives and deserve

control over their destinies. Our organization is not only working to help people keep themselves safe and alive — we also have the privilege of being a support system and safe community members for young people that some of them have not had the opportunity to experience within traditional systems. Working with young people using a strength based approach and an empowerment focused model you not only are teaching young people leadership skills you are showing young people they are truly the experts of their own lives so that they may live what they consider to be a self directed and fulfilled life. We believe that you need healthy community members to have a healthy community and vice versa. That takes all of us working together and building each other.

Some of our participants have had entanglements within the criminal justice system and or foster care system Arrests, jail time, warrants, and lasting criminal charges have made it difficult for them to be housed, employed, or even secure ongoing behavioral health treatment and case management.

Oregon voters clearly understood how these barriers were harming our communities, and how desperately Oregon needs more access to vital harm reduction and recovery services. They understood that our current system was not working, that people we love are falling through the cracks of that system; that people we love are dying. That's why the voters approved Measure 110 in 2020 by such an overwhelming margin. Recently, independent polling of Oregon voters found that voters not only understand the individual provisions of Measure 110; they overwhelmingly support them too. Peer support mentoring, supportive employment, funding addiction services, developing health and needs plans, and supporting housing were all backed in this polling by significant majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans:

- 91 percent favor peer support mentoring for those struggling with substance use
- 90 percent back supporting individuals in achieving and retaining employment
- 86 percent support funding services to help addiction recovery
- 86 percent support developing plans for individuals' health and other needs
- 84 percent support helping individuals obtain and retain safe housing
- 62 percent support funding harm reduction interventions, such as access to naloxone or syringe exchange programs
- 61 percent support eliminating criminal penalties around drug possession for personal use

HB 2089 would take more than \$40 million away from currently funded Measure 110 overdose prevention and addiction recovery services. A \$40 million cut is equivalent to cutting 50 percent

of current service funding from Lane, Washington, Jackson, Union, Morrow, Umatilla, Sherman, Wasco, Baker, Grant, and Gilliam Counties.

Lane County has 19 funded BHRN agencies. All of different sizes and all that serve different populations. HB 2089 would be devastating to all of our agencies and the progress we have made in Lane County.

CORE opposes HB 2089 because it proposes taking us back to a system that is broken, one we've tried for over 50 years, and expecting a different result. As someone who has witnessed firsthand the damage the war on drugs has caused, and has been a social worker/harm reductionist for 15 years, there was a reason that recovery and harm reduction services were chosen to implement measure 110 services first with access to care and now with BHRN funding versus the police and counties. With all due respect historically the police and counties have received and continue to receive funding (federal, state, local) and have not/cannot produce the outcomes Measure 110 is looking for. We as an agency do not agree that taking money away from Measure 110 will help further treat substance use disorder.

HB 2089 is a perfect example of how we got to be 50th in the nation in services, if we're willing to rip \$40 million from critical services at a time when so many people are suffering and want help. When you consistently get a failing grade it's time to do things differently, not revert back to an underfunded, broken system.

Now \$302 million is funding addiction services in every county in the state. People with substance use are able to get help when and where they need it. We cannot cut those services now.

Sincerely,
Brittany Raine
ED of Community Engagement
Community Outreach for Radical Empowerment

