

February 1, 2023

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

My name is Breanna Tupper and I am the Community Program Manager for 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 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 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:

- Help house multiple program participants who faced with homelessness;
- Paid fees and back-dated rent to keep participants safely housed;
- Assist in vital document recoveries, including paying for participants to get their licenses or other IDs back 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;
- Help provide funds for education endeavors and vocational training
- Give our out hundreds of doses of naloxone, fentanyl test strips and other critical survival supplies;
- Provide a safe space for youth who use drugs to explore their recovery options and life goals without judgment.

I think it's important for you to understand that our organization is not only working to help people keep themselves safe and alive — we are also providing youth with many supports that some of them have not had the opportunity to experience within traditional

systems. We are putting the power back in the hands of the youth who are the experts in their own lives so that they may live what they consider to be a self directed and fulfilled life. We are empowering youth to build their own sense of community.

Some of our participants have had entanglements within the criminal justice 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

The implementation of M110 has not been perfect, but the point stands that the money is now in the hands of providers who have the ability to assist others in changing their lives. They have the money to provide substance use disorder treatment, housing, mental health care, and many other valuable services that our communities need. To divert measure 110 funds is to divert money from Oregonians seeking help. It is to divert some

of the hope for a healthy future, a less punitive future, and a future that at this moment, with this funding, is entirely within our reach.

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. The police and counties have received and continue to receive funding to produce the outcomes they allege they want to see. I fail to understand what taking money away from Measure 110 will do to help further treat substance use disorder and its consequences. Will the police and counties be taking over the functions of measure 110 by providing access to treatment, ensuring to remove barriers to housing like criminal records and employment, paying money for first, last, and deposit, providing ongoing mental health care, connecting people to medical care, or any of the things that address the root causes of substance use disorder in the way that the agencies that are currently receiving M110 funds are?

We all agree that funding was delayed too long. But 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,

Breanna Tupper
Community Program Manager
Community Outreach for Radical Empowerment