

February 8, 2023

Dear Chair Nathanson, vice chairs Walters and Reschke and members of the finance committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB2089. As a retired psychologist who has worked with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) for almost 50 years I have seen an increase in the severity and number of cases over this time. I have also seen promising programs scrapped because they didn't produce immediate results or because of a change in the political winds. Unfortunately, we are still struggling to find the best ways to help people move beyond addiction. It is clear that there is not a simple silver bullet that will work in all cases.

Measure 110 was a crazy innovation that had many of the problems of citizen initiatives. But it does offer a chance to approach SUD treatment in new ways. The fact that we have some kind of program up and going in every county is near miraculous. Even more exciting are that many of these programs are run or advised by peers and marginalized groups who are helping shape new approaches to these problems. Not all of the programs will work, but we need to give them a chance. I hear people say that there is so much marijuana tax money that all of it is not needed. I would say that every dollar can be spent to try to find new and effective ways to move forward. There is no solution to homelessness, to mental health problems, or to the problem of so many children having to be taken from their parents until we solve our increasing dependence on illegal drugs.

So, please, give this a chance. I would urge the legislature and the governor to assure that programs have an evaluative component so that we can begin to learn what work with what groups. This information can also be fed into a feedback loop that will help programs get better. We have so many people dying, so many mothers frightened for their children on the street, and so many citizens angry and disgusted by the impacts of drug use in our communities. This is so important.

Thank you,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.