

I am Sonja Grove, representing my son Jon who died of alcohol related causes on April 5, 2020 in a cheap hotel on 82nd avenue. I am representing those in recovery from alcohol, and those who didn't make it. I am also a member of the Oregon Alcohol Policy Alliance, a group of addiction policy specialists, treatment providers, and those who have experienced Alcoholism in their families. We are dedicated to the prevention of alcoholism in Oregon.

I will always wonder if there were a variety of treatment options for alcoholics, could Jon have had the life he wanted, not one of shame for a disease that is little understood? I will always wonder if he had entered a Detox center when he was desperate for treatment, rather than three times refused because of a lack of space, would he be here today?

HB 2976 is a bill that I am disappointed to see, while neglecting other bills and actions that could change Oregon's dismal national standing for treatment and deaths (5-6 a day from alcohol related causes). I read this bill for any mention of health consequences or monitoring of alcohol – nonexistent. The strong support by some members of this Legislature is confounding, as the bill focuses on economics in an enterprise dedicated to alcohol production and sales. Has anyone acknowledged that alcohol, in any amount, is damaging, and for those with the disease, it can be death? Spirits are especially high in alcohol content, reaching 40% for some.

It is a conundrum in state government that our agencies can be diametrically opposed to healthy and effective outcomes - this bill in a nutshell. You are voting on a proposed agency that will use tax dollars for administration of health endangering products, not unlike OLCC, with its poor track record of monitoring and acknowledgement of alcohol risks. Finally, where are the bills that address our catastrophic lack of treatment and Detox facilities? I am patiently watching for bills that confront a tragic need for solving our astounding addiction numbers and deaths, rather than support for spirits' production.

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