

Michelle Hicks

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Resident of North Tabor, (House District 45)

Good afternoon Chair Bynum and members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business,

My name is Michelle Hicks and I am a resident of House District 45, writing today with my **strong support for House Bill 3431.**

As a Korean American in politics, I have seen firsthand the many impacts that the outdated policies from the War on Drugs have had on our communities. Communities most harmed by cannabis criminalization are still caught in a downward spiral resulting from over-policing, imprisonment, post-prison sentencing, and a lifetime of limited opportunity in jobs, housing, education, access to small business capital and more due to an arrest or conviction. Investing in communities who have been most harmed by the War on Drugs, is an investment in the future of Oregon. [A study by the Boston Consulting Group](#) found that, “increasing the diversity of leadership teams leads to more and better innovation and improved financial performance.” Furthermore, [they found that](#) “Companies that have a more diverse management team have on average 19% higher revenue because of innovation.” As we recover from the pandemic and weather the incoming financial crisis, we must invest in the innovation and success of BIPOC communities by funding HB 3431.

With greater investments in our communities, we will bolster the economic outlook of our state and further the goals of Ballot Measure 110. Studies have shown that social and economic stability is tied to substance abuse treatment success. Medical research says closer links must be made in treating the economic and social conditions that drive inequities in behavioral health care. We can begin to address the economic and social conditions that create substance abuse by funding HB 3431.

Our communities need the investments of HB 3431 in our communities. We need treatment and resources for people to improve their and their families' economic futures. Ongoing investment in communities of color and rural communities - the underfunded communities suffering the most from behavioral health disparities - is the highest and best use of our taxpayer funds. Every year the legislature is asked to fix a myriad of issues from education to housing to mental health; however, due to structural issues there is simply not enough tax money to fully fund each of these issues. We cannot fully solve our state's addiction crisis by only funding Measure 110 consistently, we need HB 3431.

I urge your sponsorship and support for HB 3431.

Best,

Michelle Hicks