

Tuesday, March 22, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am testifying on behalf of our coalition as neutral on HB 3431. We are providing this testimony as “neutral” rather than “opposed” because we have always supported and continued to support ongoing funding for the Economic Equity Investment Program. I am testifying before you today on behalf of the Health Justice Recovery Alliance and as a member of the Measure 110 Oversight & Accountability Council, to urge you to secure an alternate source of funding rather than stripping funds from Measure 110 services.

We have been in touch with Committee Co-Chairs and bill sponsors to provide recommendations on alternate funding streams for this important policy:

Securing an alternate source of funding for this policy other than Measure 110 dollars would benefit both programs, and ultimately the communities we serve. In short, we must find an alternate funding stream. Reducing Measure 110 dollars for this or any other purpose undermines the will of Oregon voters, who passed Measure 110 in 2020 by a 17-point margin, and reaffirmed their commitment to the law in 2022 when independent polling showed that this same margin of likely voters continue to support the law.

Additionally, Measure 110 providers are currently facing a 25% cut in funding for the critical services they provide, due to the decrease in projected cannabis tax revenue. This would be a devastating cut for their programs — especially because so many new programs are just getting off the ground thanks to Measure 110 funding, most of which was only distributed to providers last September.

Oregon’s latest cannabis tax revenue forecast shows a significant decrease in funds for future funding cycles. For the culturally specific, community-based providers that I work with both in my capacity at the Health Justice Recovery Alliance and as a member of the OAC, I can tell you that cuts in Measure 110 funding to these providers would be disastrous.

The passage of Measure 110 represents the first time that Oregon communities of color have seen funds invested specifically for addiction recovery services for those most

harmed by the war on drugs. These providers have been advocating for culturally specific services for decades, and thanks to Measure 110, these organizations are finally able to expand operations to help meet the tremendous need for the services they provide. These providers are counting on having Measure 110 funding available to help heal their communities.

HJRA and members of the Measure 110 Oversight & Accountability Council are also concerned that utilizing Measure 110 funding as the source of revenue for this bill would only serve to pit community providers against one another as they are forced to compete for scarce funds.

I urge you to stand with Oregon voters and the communities most harmed by the war on drugs by finding an alternate funding mechanism for HB 3431. Your hearts are in the right place with this policy, but we must stay the course on fully funding Measure 110 services.

We can't change course on Measure 110 now. For more than half a century, Black, brown, Indigenous and tribal communities were directly targeted, harmed, and traumatized by the war on drugs. Measure 110 is the first program of its kind where these communities most harmed are leading the way toward healing. Please don't put us in a position to have to compete for funds.

Sincerely,

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