

To: Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Kavi Shrestha, University of Oregon Student Body Vice President
Date: April 26, 2023
Subject: Support HB2395 A

My name is Finn Jacobson, and I am submitting written testimony to voice my support of HB 2395. Currently, I am a first-year student at the University of Oregon and I am the Vice President-elect of ASUO.

In 2020, Oregon voters passed Ballot Measure 110 and decriminalized small quantity possession of certain drugs. Not included in the decriminalization following this ballot measure, however, was the broadly defined category of “drug paraphernalia”, under which falls various tools that can be used for harm reduction during drug use. Oregonians voted yes on this ballot measure because we recognized the importance of harm reduction in our communities, and that human beings battling drug addiction deserve help, not hatred. Now, it’s your turn to do the same.

Through my work with ASUO and in the larger overall campus community, I have come into contact with an incredible community of student organizers who are passionately working on the de-stigmatization of drug use. From Narcan education and distribution on campus, to mobilizing students to protect themselves, their friends, and their families, they are leading the fight and stepping up to keep our communities safe. The question is, what are you willing to do? HB 2395 provides you, those who we have entrusted with important decision-making abilities, to follow through with your promises and step up.

As much as we may like it to, drug addiction is not a problem that will go away through wishful thinking and threats of imprisonment or other criminal consequences. Study after study conducted both within this state and nationally has proven that methods which embrace harm reduction are the most effective strategies for keeping our communities safe. Furthermore, tools like fentanyl testing strips and pipes are *more* than just harm reduction strategies. They are the difference between life in which someone can find help for their addiction, and death because of it. Students at my university and statewide recognize this and call on you to pass HB 2395 so that we can further our work to mobilize and educate students, saving lives in the process.

Thank you for your time.

Finn Jacobson - HB2395A Written Testimony