

Submitter: Amy Davidson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Re: Oppose HB 4002

I oppose HB 4002 and efforts to criminalize addiction.

I served crime survivors for upwards of 20 years in Oregon in both rural and urban regions. Many, if not most, of them never accessed the services they needed to heal. So it wasn't uncommon to encounter substance addiction while helping folks put their lives back together in the wake of trauma.

It's inhumane to jail someone who is experiencing a perfectly normal trauma response in the absence of real care. What Oregon needs is to invest in treatment, outreach teams and peer mentor programs. People need help, not handcuffs.

Addiction is a healthcare issue, not a crime. We cannot address the addiction crisis with arrests and jails, which add barriers to stable housing and increase overdose deaths.

Arresting and jailing people for addiction has never worked. Criminalization has inflicted decades of government harm and violence on Black and brown communities. Giving a new name to the old war on drugs won't change the results: HB 4002 will harm, not help, Oregonians.

People suffering from addiction need investments to the continuum of care. They need successful peer outreach and mobile crisis programs to help move people into housing and services. And we need law enforcement and service providers to work together to connect people to services. Oregon can do this work without making addiction a crime. This is the direction that our state should head.

I urge you to oppose HB 4002 and efforts to criminalize addiction.

Sincerely,
Amy Davidson