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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4036

Everyone has been touched by drug use and addiction but our laws should not allow a none response to its use nor should public tax money be used to support the addiction. I am speaking from the heart in that my brother has used meth since he was in high school. He's now 55 and homeless living in an old camper on the side of my sisters property. He would use them get clean then use again in cycles over his life. He got clean for the last time when a small town Judge in Springfield Oregon locked him up for 6 months. During that time he attended classes to obtain his high school diploma and took classes to learn about addiction. He learned coping skills. He had to sell his home, lot his job, his teeth fell out, his adult children don't talk to him, and the only family member he hasn't burned a bridge with due to stealing household items to feed his addiction, has allowed him to live in a camper.

As a family we learned that giving our brother money or assisting him with his house payment and bills only freed up money he used for drugs. Therefore, individuals who use illicit drugs will choose the drugs over all else even selling themselves or their minor kids to feed the addiction. Compassion will not work the drug addicted individual is unable to make rational decisions. In my brothers case his behavior has been changed forever as years of meth use has severely caused damage to his frontal lobe of his brain causing psychosis.

There is no doubt that we see this behavior in our homeless population and no amount of compassion will help them. Compassion by giving them a safe place to live and providing it for free, giving free food, free clothing, free money to corner beggars, free needles, so they can continue to use.

We must not be aiding their choice by being co dependent and failing to enforce laws to stop this behavior. When an individual uses illicit drugs they should go to jail for at least 6 months and while in the county jails they should be required to attend classes about addiction and complete the schooling needed to start a new life. When they are released they should be placed on bench probation with urine testing each week and required to attend AA or other meeting. We should work to get them a place to live and require them to keep a job. They need strict rules and structure or they will fail.

I wish my brother hadn't kept getting a slap on the wrist all those years in and out of county jail just pay the fine. I wish my brother had met the Springfield Judge when he was much younger who would have sent him to county jail to get clean and learn about his addiction before his addiction destroyed his brain.

We can do better and the arrest and keeping them for 6 months will work I know I witnesses my brother go from hardcore meth addict to someone with coping skills who is aware of his triggers that keeps him clean.