

Submitter: Karen Cain

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024

To: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

From: Karen Cain

Re: Oppose HB 4002

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Kropf, and Members of the Joint Committee:

My name is Karen Cain and I have had a great deal of interaction and experience with incarcerated individuals and those who care about them.

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. Instead, our communities need more investments in treatment, including outreach teams, peer mentor programs, and harm reduction services. People need help, not handcuffs.

I oppose HB 4002 and efforts to criminalize addiction.

As a person who has had a great deal of interaction with incarcerated individuals and those who care about them, through personal, volunteer and employment experiences, this legislation is important to me because I have seen the devastation that incarceration creates. Incarceration is no way to treat addiction, any more than it is the proper way to treat mental health problem.

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 for law enforcement and service providers to work together to connect people to services is the direction that our state should head.

I urge you to oppose HB 4002.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Karen Cain