

Submitter: Patti Thompson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4036

I am writing as a resident of Multnomah County and a professional in the addiction field for over 10 years. Criminalization of a medical disorder has not proven to be effective in the past, including during Prohibition. While some might eventually be pressured into changing by repeated interactions with the criminal justice system, there are better ways to motivate and support substance users to make change. We know that what we are currently doing is not meeting the needs of recovering people or those still struggling with addiction. We have learned from Portugal's changes that less legal ramifications is a legitimate option but we are lacking key components, including the supportive services beyond medication supported treatment and counseling, that made that approach a success. Do not go back to a system we know does not work but improve on the changes we have started to make by really following through on the model of success we have to learn from.