

Submitter: Ron Weaver Jr

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Hello, my name is Ron Weaver. I currently supervise a Substance Use Disorder program for Lutheran Community Services Northwest in Washington County as a direct result of being funded by M110.

I am writing you to share my advocacy for going forward with the Oregon voters initial investment of a new approach to a recovery system that engages those most impacted, and provides an active role, that will change the poor outcomes exacerbated by criminalization, and forced treatment.

The unfortunate reality here is that we are allowing too many varied political, and money hungry interests to influence what we all know has been a feeder for this issue for many years. We cannot simply criminalize our way out of this. No one is denying the fact that there is an epidemic going on. The increase of drug use in public settings speaks to several feeder systems that M110 was developed to address. What is amazing, is the energy to go backwards into recriminalizing this issue.

Unfortunately this conversation takes a sharp turn away from the communities hardest hit by the so called "War On Drugs". M110 is an effort to address some of the damage done to specific communities by changing the infrastructure (criminalization) that has been destroying the hope and functional opportunities for BIPOC and those who are continually marginalized by several of the same systems that are said to be there to improve the quality of life for all of humanity.

This practice of going backwards keeps Oregonians looking through them same ole dirty glasses that hold the voters hostage to limited, and reactive responses that lead to the same outcomes. As an African American man who has lived experience in both addiction and mental health, from providing services, and lived family and individual experience. I ask that you please consider staying the course, and refine the effort with additional resources that impact our outcomes with different statistics. Some that profile those most targeted by investing in them being included in responsible roles that support community specific engagement. Roles that support healthy family opportunities to engage in quality of life economic opportunities that do not reinforce the old colonial and imperialistic frames that allow privilege for a few, and reinforce generational hardship and constant struggle for others.

The science speaks to the answers here. We all agree that we don't want to see our fellow humans suffering and seeking answers in the bottom of a bottle, on foil, or

from needle points that have nothing to do with crocheting. The "Rat City" experiment tells us that we must go forward with more resources without isolating this issue to certain environments. Nor do we agree or accept that you can forced treatment, we only add to the laundry list of issues related to addiction or mental health by using the limited approach of recriminalization.