

Submitter: Zach Kearnl

On Behalf Of: Care not jail

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

My name is Zach Kearnl, I am a resident of Portland. I served for the City as a policy advisor on issues of homelessness from 2019 to 2021. I urge you to not recriminalize drug possession.

The shortcomings of Measure 110 have been largely a result of public health and public safety's failure to implement the measure as it was originally intended. Going back to criminalizing drug possession is going backwards on the healing of past wrongs and vision of a better future for communities disproportionately affected by policing and the carceral system following the murder of George Floyd.

What I believe Oregon needs is adequate investments in human-centric solutions to drug use and mental health treatment: expanding addiction services, improving housing access, and supporting non-police street outreach programs. Oregon leaders need to think holistically when weighing the benefits of a few against the cost of incarcerating people based upon drug use and homelessness. These are symptoms of inequality and historically disinvested welfare programs, not criminal behavior.

Please, vote no on any measures that would recriminalize possession. It is bad policy and a waste of taxpayer dollars, serving privileged interests at the expense of minority groups and the general public.