

Submitter: Devlin Tricamo-Palmer

On Behalf Of: no on recriminalization

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

My name is Devlin Tricamo-Palmer and I'm writing today regarding HB 4002. I want to voice my opposition to any proposal that recriminalizes drug possession in our state.

I grew up in Portland and have lived here most of my life. The addiction crisis that we see today, often playing out in public, is deeply troubling. We clearly have a health care crisis on our hands that must be addressed for the well being of our community. When I voted for Measure 110 I, like many others I know, were excited that we as Oregonians were passing the most progressive drug decriminalization bill in the United States and taking a proven approach to handling our addiction crisis.

It dismays me that just that just a few years later that Oregon's congress is seeking to recriminalize drug possession, returning to a policy approach that has not worked for decades. This rollback of Measure 110 comes as there is data available that displays that our stance of treating addiction as a healthcare crisis rather than a crime is working. There have been large gains in people accessing treatment for addiction all over the state, along with people successfully using supported employment and housing programs.

Now is not the time to move backwards: the programs Measure 110 created need to be further funded and expanded. Criminalizing drug possession does nothing to help this issue. Instead, all we would see from HB 4002 in its proposed form is a return to a system that not only is proven to not work, but that will lead to more people going to jail, more people being displaced, more families being torn apart and more people dying from drug overdose. HB 4002 does exactly the opposite of what it is supposedly trying to fix.

Please consider that black and brown communities will be especially harmed by HB 4002's changes, just as they have been for decades with the War on Drugs. We know that members of these communities will be targeted disproportionately, and will be arrested at higher rates and more likely to face incarceration and harsher sentencing. Our country, and particularly the state of Oregon, has already spent over 150 years enforcing policies that terrorize minority communities. The fact that we are considering reversing course now, even as a long path remains ahead to reverse our state's cruel history, saddens me.

I wish the members of the committee, congress and our state as a whole would recognize addiction as a healthcare issue and not a criminal one. I hope they would

accept that the entire nation is dealing with this terrible drug crisis, and our decriminalization bill has done nothing to further fuel it, as proven by many different studies. Please, members of the committee, vote no on any measure that recriminalizes possession.