

Submitter: Eli Earle

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

My name is Eli Earle. I'm an OSU student, which is why I wasn't able to testify in person today, but I wanted to submit written testimony because I believe this issue is important.

I do think there are beneficial parts of this bill. Making it easier to get medications like Narcan and finding new money for addiction services would help a lot of people. However, I don't think those things are worth the harm that would result from re-criminalizing drug possession. On campus I do a lot of community work, and I've seen how queerness, race, houselessness, substance use, addiction, and state violence are all linked. I have no doubt that if this bill passes it will result in the most vulnerable people in our communities being incarcerated. Our police have been conditioned to see their role in society as protecting innocents by throwing immoral people in prison. They've also been conditioned to view drug use as immoral. Four short years of decriminalization won't change those attitudes. Even if they're required to offer social services, I worry that this law is more likely to lead people to jail cells than treatment centers. There are other ways to solve this problem more in line with harm reduction principles. I sincerely ask you to pursue those solutions instead.