

Submitter: Amelia Clary

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

As a psychiatric nurse, I urge the committee to see addiction for the health crisis that it is that can only effectively be addressed through community based health and social services. Recriminalizing addiction only serves to further disenfranchise those experiencing addiction, increase risks of overdose, overburden the judicial system and waste taxpayer money on ineffective, costly punitive measures for what is a public health matter. It is poorly constructed bandaid we have already tried, and that Oregonians already rejected. Not only this, but we know all too well how addiction criminalization leads to the disproportionate arrests of Black and Brown citizens and the over policing of their communities.

Does the legislature and the state of Oregon lack so much imagination, creativity, and hope for our state that it cannot fathom a better solution for a public health crisis than the same failed policy of criminalization? Jails and prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear people. I urge the legislature to be only so bold as to make evidence-based policy surrounding addiction, a public health crisis, under the guidance of public health and addiction experts, investing in community health resources and supports.

Criminalization is an ineffective and inhumane failed policy that only further marginalizes Black and Brown communities and wastes taxpayers dollars.