

Submitter: Brad Reed  
On Behalf Of: Opposed to HB 4002  
Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response  
Measure: HB4002

Addiction is not a crime, it is a healthcare issue. While almost every major city and state struggles with homelessness, declining mental health, and rising overdose deaths, only Oregon voters, so far, have seen clearly that making someone a criminal in addition to those other struggles does not help them or our communities. As voters who overwhelmingly supported Measure 110, we directed the state to invest in science-based, trauma informed treatment and a continuum of recovery services. We collectively turned away from relying on law enforcement and the failed 60+ years of poorly fitting criminal punishment for sick and vulnerable people. Punishing people with a criminal record makes employment, housing, and myriad other necessary life functions more difficult, without improving recovery rates. In fact, it drives overdose deaths up.

Oregon should redouble its efforts to solve difficult, systemic problems like poverty, untreated mental health problems, and homelessness that lead people into addiction, as well as investing more into the full care system needed to help people overcome addiction.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on HB 4002.

This bill will overturn Measure 110, making possession of small amounts of controlled substances a misdemeanor punishable by jail time, a fine, or both. Criminalizing addiction has never worked to reduce overdose deaths or help people get care. HB 4002 takes us backwards by:

- Treating addiction as a crime;
- Inflicting more government harm and violence on Black and brown communities;
- Putting Measure 110 funding at risk. Diverting funding to the criminal system that could be used for addiction services;
- Further overburdens the public defense system, which is already over capacity.

Oregon can and must do better than HB 4002 to address the addictions crisis. HB 4002 is an inadequate and harmful approach that will not solve our addictions crisis and will instead waste taxpayer dollars. HB 4002 will result in more people going to jail, more people being harmed, more individuals being displaced, more families being disrupted, more people dying from overdoses. The legislature should focus on real solutions that will help our communities instead of returning to the failed policies of the past that simply won't work.

I urge you to please vote no on HB 4002.