

Submitter: William Cornog  
On Behalf Of: Average Citizen  
Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response  
Measure: HB4036

I strongly encourage you to pass the measures to outlaw public use of controlled substances and to increase the penalty for violation of the law, such that it is a meaningful deterrent, while providing public safety officers with the tools they need to constructively intervene and enforce the law. Oregon's politicians appear to place more emphasis on the treatment and well being of drug addicts vs. the impact these addicts have on our broader community.

I agree that putting drug addicts in jail is not the solution. But the police need to be empowered to seize drugs, issue citations and "arrest" people who are then taken to treatment (by force if necessary). Similarly, public camping must be banned (hopefully with an assist from the Supreme Court this summer), with the homeless being directed to shelters with wrap around services (food, clothing, healthcare). At present, downtown Portland is a shadow of its formerly clean, vibrant, and diverse state, when only 5 years ago Portland had a national reputation as a cultural, green, innovative and thriving community. Today, the streets are filled with drug users and the mentally ill and the sidewalks and parks are littered with trash and worse.

It is important we care for our "marginal" communities, but not at the expense of the broader community that works, is raising families and paying some of the highest taxes (on a marginal basis) in the country, while suffering a serious decline in quality of living. Poor public policy and, frankly, gross government incompetence, is causing Oregon's largest city to bleed population, economic activity and tax revenue.

I'm a native Oregonian who has lived all over the country (most recently in Texas). We have a son at an Oregon university and we just purchased a condo in downtown Portland (against the advice of everyone we know who told us to go to Lake Oswego). Like many citizens we are committed to Portland's rejuvenation and want to invest behind the recovery. However, bad public policy permitting open air use of hard drugs and ubiquitous public camping (with all the negative externalities of both) are massive obstacles to progress and healing.

Please do your jobs and restore Oregon's quality of life while investing in facilities and support services that also demonstrate Oregon's heart.