

Submitter: Ed Diehl

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4036

HB4036 END Measure 110 – Abolishing the Oversight and Accountability Council

A key provision of HB 4036 is to keep the funding established by Measure 110, but direct it in a way that aligns with what the voters are demanding: “Drug Addiction Treatment & Recovery.”

I believe that the Oversight and Accountability Council, established by Measure 110 to manage and distribute the funds, needs to be abandoned and replaced. This Council has proven to be ineffectual, with misguided priorities. And in my opinion, they will never get it right.

Addiction recovery experts and the Oregon public are in alignment – required treatment works, invest in treatment facilities and supports for recovery and reward the right behavior. The goal should be to get people clean.

The Council, however, has a completely different philosophy and priorities. The Council has stated, in committee, that they do not believe in requiring treatment – they flatly stated that it does not work. They are not funding long-term treatment facilities. And they don’t fund facilities for people trying to get away from the drug use environment. Instead of rewarding good behavior, in my opinion they enable bad behavior by destigmatizing drug use, providing literature on the safe ways to use drugs, and providing what are termed as ‘harm reduction supplies’ such as clean needles, new pipes, and new foil. This is simply enabling, and encouraging, drug use. What’s worse, they don’t have a goal of getting people clean – they view that as too hard.

As another example of misplaced priorities, we heard from a provider who had long waiting lists for residential treatment, desired to build more residential treatment, only to be told by the Council that funding was only available for “harm reduction” supplies and services.

Drug users are lining up at non-profits doors to get their free needles and foil, and instructions on how to use safely (if there is such a thing with Fentanyl.) And what kind of message is the Council sending our kids with these policies? As Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan recently noted: “There is no stigma about drug use anymore. Kids think it’s OK because there are no consequences.”

The Council has given millions of your hard-earned tax dollars to new non-profits with no track record, no management structure, and no accountability to demonstrate results. The OHA is currently trying to claw back some of that money from organizations that misspent the funds.

In summary, the Oversight and Accountability Council is unrepairable. As such, this bill calls for the abolishment of the Council, and handing control of the funds to the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, an agency that reports directly to the governor.

HB 4036 does not take away any funding, but rather directs that funding toward evidence-based Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery.