

Submitter: Lindsay Berschauer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Co-Chairs Lieber & Kropf, Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony on behalf of myself, Yamhill County Chair Lindsay Berschauer, even though the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners has weighed in previously against M110. Our Board acknowledged the devastating impacts M110 has had on our local communities and view this issue as a critical priority for the Legislative session. We have also voted to join and support AOC's position that any legislation regarding M110 include a recriminalization of possession of hard drugs as a Class A misdemeanor.

Our Sheriff's Dept, DA's office, and County Judges have all been on record stating that M110 has been a failure. No longer do we have the ability to intersect and impact lives through the court system and our local drug court in a compassionate way that promotes recovery and a life free of addiction. If there are no legal consequences to using or possessing hard drugs, our citizens will continue to spiral deeper into addiction. You've seen the shocking increases in Oregon's addiction rates. M110 is the direct cause of this.

It does not make sense that penalties around alcohol use, possession or consumption are now harsher than that of methamphetamine. This M110 "experiment" has failed, and Oregonians have paid for it with their lives. Enough is enough.

Not only are we losing people daily to overdoses, we are also combatting the flow of deadly fentanyl into our county. Counties across Oregon cannot keep up with the consequences of this if the Legislature doesn't step in and fix the problems that M110 created. We need more tools to fight this crisis, not less.

Making possession and use of hard drugs a Class A misdemeanor is necessary for allowing us the ability to impact lives in meaningful ways. The proposed Class C misdemeanor is ineffective and nonsensical as nothing will change in the way law enforcement responds to these cases.

The time to pivot away from M110 is now. Doing so will save lives.

Thank you,
Lindsay Berschauer
Yamhill County Chair

