



---

Dear Oregon Law Makers,

My name is Kat Salas and I am the Director of the New Day Program at New Avenues for Youth, a program serving youth survivors (12-26) of Sex Trafficking in Multnomah County.

**I am submitting written testimony to oppose HB 4002 and share my serious concerns about House Bill 4002 and the impact proposed legislation will have on survivors of Sex Trafficking.**

I have been involved in street based outreach, community care, and harm reduction education for a decade. I am also a Survivor of sex trafficking. Nearly 600 youth survivors have **voluntarily** engaged in New Day Services since our program began in 2018. We provide outreach, mentorship, mental health therapy, housing subsidy, recovery support, 24/7 crisis line, and culturally specific services in Multnomah County.

Often, we find ourselves connecting with young folks on a crisis line while they're still in the turmoil of being trafficked. It's in these raw moments that they summon the courage to reach out to us, and we're honored to be there to offer them support and resources. Through our motel vouchering program and outreach efforts, we help survivors strategize their escape to safety. This journey isn't just tough—it's dangerous. Many times, we meet them in their motel room after they've fled, and there's this moment of quiet before we dive into the specifics of legal aid, finding shelter, and other resources. As someone who's felt that intense mix of fear and hope, I can tell you, it's something else.

But then reality hits hard. A lot of survivors don't have money saved up, a place to stay, or even basic life skills. And the biggest hurdle is something unexpected. I've lost count of how many times a survivor has sat across from me and said, "I have be real with you—he's got me hooked on drugs, and I'm lost." **Imagine escaping a trafficker, only to face the choice of detoxing alone in a hotel room or risking getting arrested due to laws like HB4002 that criminalize addictions instead of investing in accessible recovery services.**

Substances are a tool widely used by traffickers to maintain control, groom, and coerce survivors. While the initial introduction of substances into the dynamics of trafficking and coercion vary, criminalization as outlined in HB4002 only insure that more trafficking survivors will end up in jail before they are able to connect with supportive services. Under HB 4002, someone arrested, charged, and released will find it more difficult to get housing, government assistance, jobs, and education due to a life-damaging criminal record. Lack of resources and viable income force vulnerable populations into the survival sex trade due to lack of options putting them at higher risk for sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

I urge you to reconsider HB 4002. While I acknowledge the genuine concern surrounding the fentanyl overdose crisis in Oregon, and the profound impact it has had on individuals and communities, I believe this legislation is hastily conceived and fails to adequately consider the implications for vulnerable groups, particularly survivors of sex trafficking. We cannot prioritize short term solutions over the lives or Oregon's youth and most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kat Salas", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kat Salas  
New Day Director  
[Ksalas@newavenues.org](mailto:Ksalas@newavenues.org)



**new  
avenues**  
FOR YOUTH

---