

# IMAGINE BLACK

Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024  
To: Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response  
From: Imagine Black  
Re: Opposition HB 4002  
Email: [joyalise@imagineblack.org](mailto:joyalise@imagineblack.org)

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Kropf, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee:

My name is Joy Alise Davis, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Imagine Black, where I serve as the President and Executive Director. Imagine Black is an Oregon Black-led nonprofit focused on democracy, leadership development, and civic engagement, with members and supporters in every county in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 4002 and recriminalization.

Drug addiction is not a criminal issue but a public health crisis that demands compassionate solutions. For individuals and families to thrive, we must invest in addiction treatment and support services. Arresting and incarcerating individuals struggling with addiction only compounds their challenges, leading to barriers in housing, employment, and education. Oregonians deserve genuine solutions that uplift our communities.

I adamantly oppose the arrest of individuals grappling with addiction or mental illness. Historically, incarceration has never addressed housing or healthcare crises, and reverting to recriminalization will only perpetuate the suffering of vulnerable Oregonians. Empowering law enforcement to apprehend individuals in crisis disproportionately endangers Black communities, exacerbating already alarming rates of negative police interactions. Prior to the enactment of Measure 110, Portland Police were arresting Black individuals at over four times the rate of white individuals, ranking fifth in the nation for racial disparities in arrests. A return to draconian drug policies will only exacerbate this disparity.

Rather than relying on punitive measures and police interventions, let us prioritize providing comprehensive support to those in need. Media reports underscore that the real crisis lies in the dearth of mental health services and stable housing for those struggling. Individuals using substances outdoors are often unhoused, lacking access to safe housing and affirming treatment. This is the crisis that demands urgent legislative action.

We cannot continue to subject individuals grappling with housing and behavioral health crises to the risk of arrest, especially when our leaders have failed to provide adequate solutions.

Imagine Black implores you to support expanding access to treatment and housing for genuine solutions that offer Oregonians the support and services they need without criminalizing addiction or perpetuating the failed War on Drugs.

Thank you,  
Joy Alise Davis  
President and Executive Director  
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