



To: Joint Committee on Addition and Community Safety
Response

From: Imagine Black

Re: Opposition HB 4002

Date: February 7th 2024

Co-Chair Leirber, Co-Chair Kropf, and Members Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 4002. My name is Danita Harris; I am the Deputy Director of Movement Building at Imagine Black, a community-driven organization envisioning a world where people of African descent enjoy the rights, resources, and recognition to be a thriving, resilient, and connected community.

HB 4002's public safety provisions have raised significant concerns. The drafting of this legislation included several stakeholder meetings with invited parties across the spectrum of care, policing, city and county representation, agency representation, and District Attorneys. However, culturally specific organizations were not broadly included despite the disproportionate impacts of recriminalization. To be frank, I was the only Black person in these meetings. Planning policy that will directly impact communities that are intentionally removed from the planning process is all too familiar in this legislature and consistently results in dire consequences for the Black community.

Enhanced penalties for delivery being proposed in this bill include being within 500 ft of a temporary residence shelter and treatment facilities found in our communities and all parks. This significantly impacts large swaths of our neighborhoods. In addition, HB 4002 includes provisions that essentially allow the police to enact a statewide stop-and-frisk program that has proven to be a failure for decades and yielded dangerous results for Black and brown Oregonians.

While legislators consistently state that they do not want to return to the War on Drugs, these policies do exactly that. Before implementing Measure 110, Portland Police were arresting Black people at over four times the rate of our white peers, the fifth worst rate in the entire county. After implementation, Black Oregonians have been issued Class E violations at double the rate of our population, despite drug use being similar across demographics.

The War on Drugs was not a single policy implemented one time decades ago. It is a series of policies implemented over time by decision-makers who have chosen to work against the data to uplift a policing model for a healthcare crisis. Black Oregonians Deserve Better; I implore you not to replicate the same harms of the past.

Thank you,
Danita Harris, Deputy Director of Movement Building
Imagine Black