

I fully support House Bill 4036 to correct the tragic wrong turn that Oregon took when we passed Ballot Measure 110.

The voters of Oregon got this wrong. We wanted to allow more freedom, but instead we unleashed the bondage of addiction and multiplied the numbers of people who fell into its chains. We wanted to show compassion to the addict, but instead we have cruelly created more and more addicts by making Oregon streets a magnet for cartel-supplied drugs.

We wanted safer, friendlier streets, but we have created streets where children step over zoned out addicts and their used needles on their walks to school.

We wanted to increase treatment options for those who struggle with addiction, but we forgot that the addiction robs its victim of the ability to choose help over the next hit. Recently one of our fellow Oregonians explained in a viral video clip as he took a long drag from something on a piece of aluminum foil, 'I continue to use [fentanyl] every day against my own free will.' He has lost the ability to choose to get help.

HB 4036 forces those suffering addiction on our streets to choose between diversion to treatment with the help they know they need and spending time in jail. We need the Class A misdemeanor penalty to nudge these suffering Oregonians to choose help. Without the threat of incarceration, they will remain largely unable to make the choice they need.

Take drugs off the streets of Oregon. The recent drug bust involving 370 gallons of liquid heroin passing through the Columbia Gorge and then down I-5 illustrates the drug highway we have invited into our state. This has to stop. Give the addicted the compassionate choice of seeking help and treatment while they detox or going to jail for a year. A Class C misdemeanor and its 30-days of jail is not enough time for an addict to break the chains of bondage. Oregon needs the Class A misdemeanor to help free our fellow Oregonians from the terrible mistake that we made in passing Ballot Measure 110.