

TRACY CRAMER
State Representative
House District 22



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 7, 2023

RE: Testimony in support of HB 4036

Chairs Lieber and Kropf and members of the committee,

Thank you for scheduling HB 4036 for a public hearing. I think it is important that Oregonians hear the debate over Measure 110 out in the open like this.

Allowing people to use drugs without the hope of getting clean and sober isn't compassionate; it's cruel. And I want to focus my comments on the impact it is having on families, youth, and schools.

Measure 110 has downplayed the negative impact of hard drugs. Measure 110 has created a culture amongst our youth that downplays the impact of drug use. We can't afford to continue that culture. Our kids' brains are still developing, and kids who are using don't understand they have a problem. We need to prevent our youth from using before they ever start.

HB 4036 would make it clear that drug use is not neutral and that our goal is to get people sober – not to enable them or help them do drug safely, but to help them get off of drugs.

It's clear that youth drug use has skyrocketed under Measure 110. We are 3rd in the nation for teen addiction rates and teen drug deaths have grown faster here than any other state. 90% of adult drug users report beginning to use drugs in their youth.

Current youth interventions aren't working. Recent reporting showed that most of Oregon's school districts aren't using evidence-based curricula to teach students about drugs and to encourage them not to use them. Some school districts in Linn County have seen success by partnering with the county health department to develop a science-backed curriculum. That's why it is also important that HB 4036 brings the local county health department back to the table as part of the solution, instead of what we have right now, where all the power is concentrated in Salem bureaucracy (Oregon Health Authority).

This bureaucracy hasn't prioritized youth. More treatment options for our youth are critically important. In the recent Measure 110 audit done by the Secretary of State, of the 230 addiction service providers, only 26 providers—just 15% —offered services to youth.

HB 4036 will reinstate tools to stop other crimes against our youth. Criminalization of drug use and possession isn't just a tool to intervene in the life of a person struggling with addiction. It also provides law enforcement resources to intervene in criminal activity where drug use is prevalent, like human trafficking. If no one is citing or getting arrested for possession, then it makes it nearly impossible for law enforcement to assist in identifying youth who are being sexually trafficked.

In conclusion, we must re-orient our approach to drug use, but specifically when it comes to youth prevention.

I believe HB 4036 gives us the best chance to do that, and I urge the committee's support.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Cramer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tracy Cramer
State Representative
House District 22