

Submitter: Alexander LaVake

On Behalf Of: Criminalization has failed America

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4036

As a public health professional in Oregon for 10+ years, I OPPOSE any form of drug recriminalization. Those policies failed the American people for decades. Measure 110 opened the door for a new Oregon, one that can lead the country into a new era. However, M110 is being erroneously viewed as the cause of increased overdose and homelessness, which the data does not support. Both COVID impact and surging fentanyl supplies across the west coast have created problems in cities and states beyond Oregon.

The BHRN's are just beginning to show us how increased funding and programming can make a difference for people, families, and our communities. While it will take more time to adjust the policies, we can NOT go backwards with any level of drug criminalization in Oregon. This will perpetuate a system that has not worked in American. In the time of fentanyl, overdose risk can be 10-fold after incarceration. Arrests as a way to solve drug use will cause increased overdose and death in our already suffering communities. This novel policy needs more time and restructuring, not rolling back.

Drug addiction and misuse is a health care issue, not a crime.