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Senate District 11

## **Testimony against HB 4002**

Dear Committee Members:

HB 4002 does next to nothing to solve the flaws in Measure 110. If you are really serious about getting someone off of addictive substances such as fentanyl, heroine and other drugs, the thought process being used in HB 4002 will not give a drug user any incentive to get treatment for his/her drug use habit.

I am thinking of someone I know who unfortunately has had a drug use problem for many years. I'll call him "Tom" for clarification's sake. Interestingly, Tom thinks of himself as not fitting in with other drug users. He thinks of them as having one tooth, out of control and needing the help to get off drugs. Tom doesn't think he fits that profile. But I can tell you, he does. Tom has been on drugs for so long, his main thought is how to get his next fix. He also has medical problems that need attention desperately. He is afraid to go to the doctor because he just knows he'll be forced into treatment. Tom has been in jail many times over the past 40 years for drug use. He serves his time and then is released to continue his habit. Nothing puts Tom in a better mood than to get a fix. Had Tom had a different experience with the justice system, he might have become a *former* drug user by this time. Had he been ordered to get mandatory treatment way back in time, Tom might have been a productive citizen a long time ago.

Fast forward to today. Tom is still a heavy drug user. He lost his driver license for life (though he still drives), he has no desire to get off drugs and continues to do anything he can to get the drugs he so desperately needs to satisfy his craving.

Tom is perfectly comfortable serving time in jail without having to do treatment. It's been his second home for years. I can't help but think that if he had been required to go into treatment rather than going to jail or paying a useless fine, his story could have been much different today. Tom has a gift for being able to work on electronics. He could have made a career of it. He is brilliant! He could have been a productive citizen instead wasting his brain focusing on his next fix. Tom takes what he believes to be the easy way out.

**Hard drugs should be a Class A misdemeanor the very first time a person faces law enforcement.** A person needs more than 15-30 days to get off addictive drugs ideally followed by face-to-face monitoring for as long as it takes. They need to be accountable and not just go through the motions only to jump back on drugs.

Tom lies, steals, and will do anything necessary to get his fix. The thought of going to treatment is the furthest thing from his mind. Meanwhile, he leaves a trail of victims behind. Tom is probably what I would classify as a typical drug user.

HB 4002 is being sold as doing something, when it really doesn't. It is deceiving people into thinking a drug addict is actually being helped when they aren't.

If the goal is to help people get off drugs, HB 4002 does little to nothing. If the goal is to "appear" to be doing something when you really are not, this is your bill.