



February 7, 2024

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

My name is Will Lathrop and I have dedicated my entire career to protecting women and children from violence. We are all here today – and this committee exists – because Measure 110 has been a failed human experiment that has devastated our state.

The economics conditions created by Measure 110 have enabled foreign drug cartels to profit millions of dollars by crushing families, neighbors, and communities across Oregon. Substance abuse and overdoses are at record highs while an embarrassingly low number of addicted Oregonians are choosing to participate in treatment.

In symmetry with our current addiction crisis, we have a child maltreatment crisis. Measure 110 took tools away from law enforcement to be able to reach children in homes of addiction and to rescue them from abuse and neglect. Children living in addicted homes are three times more likely to be sexually abused and four times more likely to suffer maltreatment. They are also more likely to use drugs themselves, fail in school, and develop long-term physical and mental health disorders. In recent years, teen overdoses in Oregon have risen by 550%.

The permissible culture of addiction wrought by Measure 110, is creating an atmosphere that promotes generational trauma, chronic drug use, and perpetual poverty.

In 2020, when out of state billionaires and DC activists promoted Measure 110, local experts in law enforcement and in the treatment and recovery community saw through the mass marketing campaign and called the measure out for what it was and continues to be — the unmitigated legalization of the most addictive, dangerous, and destructive drugs in history.

Those experts in law enforcement and treatment services rightly predicted what would happen to our communities if the measure passed. State leadership ignored them.

Now, this committee is proposing a solution that ignores the recommendations of law enforcement, treatment experts, local leaders, and the people working on the ground. In fact, there is a chorus of experts calling this bill a “half-measure.” Oregonians demand real solutions – not half-measures.

Why are you refusing to adopt what experts and local leaders are asking for?

Why does the legislature think it knows more than the people trained and experienced to solve this emergency?

We are in the middle of a historical human crisis, this is not the time for political deals, weak responses, or half-measures. The moment demands real action. I have come today to plead with you to adopt the recommendations of people who were right in 2020 and are right today.