

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber, Representative Jason Kropf, and committee members,

The following is my personal opinion, not the opinion of the City of Medford. I am writing today in opposition to HB 4002, HB 4036, and SB 1555. I had the privilege of listening to all of the in person testimony provided to your committee at your hearing on February 7th. The testimonies of those in opposition were more than convincing. The stories and information shared, proving the disproportionate impacts that criminalization has had on black and brown Oregonians was overwhelming.

I urge you to listen to the people of color who shined a light on the fact that 50 years of criminalization has not solved the crisis but only worsened it. The root causes of this crisis are a lack of affordable housing, extreme poverty, and a lack of services in our communities. These problems cannot be solved by recriminalizing drugs.

I urge you to hear the many public defenders who stated that accountability is best developed through care, not jail. They warned that our already strained criminal justice system will grind to a halt should we recriminalize.

Rather than wasting resources via incarceration and enforcement, please focus on continuing to expand and increase behavioral health services and building the housing we need. As was stated at the hearing, let's give Measure 110 at least 10 years when we gave the war on drugs 50.

Sincerely,
Sarah Spansail
City Councilor, Medford