

Submitter: Ryan Haynes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: SB1555

I hope this letter finds you well and thriving. As a concerned citizen deeply invested in the welfare and prosperity of our communities, I feel compelled to address a pressing issue that has significantly impacted the fabric of our society.

The decision to decriminalize the use of controlled substances was initially embraced with optimism, aimed at alleviating the burden on our criminal justice system and treating drug addiction as a health issue rather than a criminal one. However, the repercussions of this policy have unfolded in ways that demand our immediate attention and action. Our streets, once vibrant and full of life, are increasingly overshadowed by the distressing presence of individuals deeply affected by addiction, leading to a scenario some describe with the stark imagery of "meth zombies."

This letter is an appeal to revisit the policy of decriminalizing the public use of controlled substances. The intention behind the original policy was commendable, rooted in empathy and a desire for a more humane approach to addiction. Yet, the reality we face today is one where the public consumption of these substances has not only jeopardized the health and safety of the individuals involved but has also posed a broader risk to public safety and the well-being of our communities at large.

The transformation of our public spaces into areas where drug use is openly visible has profound implications for our children, families, and the overall perception of safety in our neighborhoods. It strains our healthcare systems, diverts law enforcement resources, and complicates the efforts of social services to provide support to those in need.

In advocating for the recriminalization of the public use of controlled substances, the goal is not to punish those struggling with addiction but to take a critical step towards addressing the issue more effectively. This policy shift should be part of a comprehensive strategy that includes increased access to addiction treatment, mental health services, and community support programs. It's about creating a framework that not only addresses the symptoms of the problem but also tackles its root causes, providing pathways to recovery and rehabilitation for those affected.

The essence of this appeal is to balance compassion for individuals battling addiction with the collective responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of our communities. It's a call to action to restore the dignity of our public spaces, to safeguard the health of our citizens, and to rekindle the sense of community that

makes Oregon a remarkable place to live.

I trust in your leadership and wisdom to guide our state through this challenging issue, towards a future where our streets are safe and welcoming for everyone, and where individuals struggling with addiction have the support and resources they need to heal and thrive.

Thank you for considering this pressing matter. I look forward to seeing the positive changes your leadership will bring to our communities.