

Chairs Leiber and Kropf (CROP-F), members of the committee,

My name is Nicole Henriksen. I work in mental health, am a masters student in social work, and live in Portland, OR.

I am disheartened by the recriminalization that SB 1555 proposes, it will not work, will set us backwards, and will disrupt lives. Working in mental health, the wait lists are extremely long and there are extensive barriers to accessing services. I am fed up with our system that allows so many people to fall through the cracks. You say the open air drug market is “unacceptable” - waiting six months for treatment is unacceptable. Measure 110 will work if we put in all of our efforts into building a system that actually supports recovery, providing wrap-around services that meet the unique needs of each individual. Threatening people with prison sentences does not work. It is immoral and ineffective to punish the disease of addiction. Diversion will fail unless we have these systems set up, so why wouldn't we focus all our energy in creating effective treatment that allows people to access services when they need it, on their own terms?

Please, protect Measure 110 funding that is helping thousands of people receive life saving treatment. Put all your effort into increasing the behavioral health provisions of SB 1555. We need to focus on building services that support recovery such as withdrawal management, supervised injection sites, detox, in-patient, recovery and sober housing, and more. Do not waste our valuable tax dollars on carceral systems that do not work and disproportionately harm BIPOC and marginalized communities. Thank you for your time.