

Submitter: Joe Bazeghi
On Behalf Of: Addiction is not a crime
Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
Measure: HB4002

Co-Chairs Lieber and Kropf and Members of the Committee

I am Joe Bazeghi, human being with lived experience of substance use disharmony, drug courts, and criminal justice systems in Oregon currently honored to serve as Director of Engagement for Recovery Works NW, a leading provider of medications and treatment for substance use disorders in Oregon.

Criminal sanctions do not make drug use or addictions disappear in our communities and hamper treatment professionals' ability to offer evidence-based interventions.

Compelled treatment is not an evidence-based practice for the treatment of substance use disorders.

“Patients, not prisoners” is the only chance we have to get out of the mess within which we find ourselves.

60+ years of failed war on drugs policies have demonstrated there is no schema of criminal sanction that facilitate healing from the diagnosable medical and behavioral health condition known as substance use disorder.

We must invest our scarce resources in treatment beds and behavioral health professionals, not jails and convoluted court programs.

With mere possession decriminalized we, as treatment providers, can ethically coordinate with public safety professionals in partnership and outreach efforts such as the promising pilot program currently underway between Portland and Oregon State Police, MHA AO, Recovery

Works NW, and other treatment and social services providers. We will be unable to pursue these promising partnerships under the threat of criminal sanctions for mere possession. We are on the verge of something big in Oregon, this is no time for backsliding.

There is no right sized stick with which to beat sick people that will make them heal or meaningfully access healthcare.

Criminal sanctions or the threat of criminal sanctions are barriers to evidence-based treatment for the diagnosable medical and behavioral health condition of substance use disorders. Allow the groundbreaking work of Measure 110 to continue unmolested.

In recovery circles it is often heard stated that doing the same thing and expecting different results is a definition of insanity, and returning to criminal sanctions for mere possession is certainly that.

Please vote no on HB 4002, HB 4036, and SB 1555.

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