

Submitter: Jessica Holton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Hello,

I'm writing to register my strong support for HB 4002. As a mother in Portland, it has become increasingly challenging to raise my daughter in an environment that features this much open drug abuse and chaos. I've had to explain to my daughter, when she was 5, why she has seen people urinating and defecating in public, screaming obscenities (including at her), masturbating in public, engaging in acts of violence, and creating a general unhealthy environment for children. Portland is losing children and families. This current experiment is something that young, idealistic, and childless people may be able to wait out, hoping that the current all carrot and no stick approach somehow starts magically working. Those with us with children don't have this privilege. We only get to raise our children once and this environment is an increasingly unhealthy place to do so. Reforming the current legislation is an investment in the future of Portland and is so obviously needed.

Currently, we are holding homeless fentanyl addicts to a standard that is lower than the standards to which parents hold toddlers. There is no respect for others whatsoever, no expectation to try to be a better person, no accountability at all (until they actual kill or attempt to kill someone), and no duty to be a good citizen. When children disrespect others, engage in risky behavior, or act in other anti-social ways, parents don't just stand around declaring that kids have the right to do whatever they want. Parents teach, parents correct, parents love and support, and parents do what is needed to encourage good behavior and disincentivize bad behavior. How we understand this is appropriate for kids but not dysfunctional adults is completely beyond me. We are enabling this population and deepening this crisis with our current approach.

Fentanyl users are making all of our lives substantially worse in enduring and countless ways. Given the extent to which Portland currently attracts folks that are comfortable being homeless and fentanyl addicted from elsewhere, it is also incredibly unrealistic - to the point of malpractice - to focus just on building enough housing for this continuously growing population, though we certainly need to increase affordable housing. Even with a huge increase in affordable housing, fentanyl is completely different than everything that came before it and "experts" haven't acknowledged this plain fact with a change in approach and public policy. We need to change the incentives that public policy places on these individuals in order to expect real sustainable change. Feeling entitled to openly use hard drugs in front of children and to engage in any behavior they want whatsoever is absolute insanity,

and we created this situation. HB 4002 is a step in the right direction to correcting it.

While we're not the loudest people in the room, large majorities of Portland have come to understand based on what they see themselves on a daily basis that the current status quo is unacceptable and needs to change significantly. If the legislature doesn't do, we will do it directly. I hope you represent your actual constituents and not just the people who benefit financially from the current conditions when making your vote.

Thank you,

Jessica