



To the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

Here are 10 reasons NOT to re-criminalize possession of personal-use amounts of addictive substances:

1. In 2020, 58% of Oregon voters approved M.110, believing that "people suffering from addiction are more effectively treated with health care services than with criminal punishments". No one expected this transition to a new approach would happen instantly.
2. After over 30 years of the "war on drugs", and considering that Oregon had allowed the state to sink to the bottom in terms of treatment availability, several years are clearly required to fully implement the program before evaluation.
3. It is well-known now that in most cases treatment is successful in the long term when the addicted person is ready for it rather than coerced into it and when it is non-punitive and addresses multiple issues.
4. Oregon is currently in a crisis concerning lack of public defenders. Not only will there not be lawyers available for drug possessors who cannot afford representation, but users cannot be deflected from jail to treatment unless represented in the process, defeating the plan currently contained in the bills.
5. The state does not currently have a deflection program nor the funds to set it up and monitor it.
6. Homelessness might lead to drug use; but there is no data supporting drug use as the cause of homelessness. Insufficient income and the lack of affordable housing are the main cause homelessness. Addicts who have housing can use drugs there without detection. Poor people who are living on the streets or in shelters will be the users who are targeted for arrest, a clear discrimination issue.
7. Preventing death and overdoses is a higher priority than preventing all drug use. Drug education in schools has failed to provide a scientific approach that will educate and protect students, particularly regarding Fentanyl and opioids.
8. Since conditions are different in different counties, the outcome of the re-criminalization plan contained in the bills under consideration will be inequitable
9. Without a Racial/Ethnic Impact Statement, no re-criminalization bill can go forward.
10. There is no good reason to rush into a re-criminalization/deflection program in the current Short Session that has not had time to be well-thought out, when we already have the M.110 program that is now up and running and succeeding.

• • • • •

Oregon needs proven and real solutions including more treatment, housing, prevention education, and non-police mobile crisis response teams.

members of Justice Advocates:

Alicia Polacok	Layla Assem	Gloria Halper
Evelyn Stewart	Sally Joughin	Sue Caddell
Lanny Brenner	Robert Reynolds	Elizabeth Willbach