

Submitter: Loni Gray

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Bravo for finding a beginning window through this difficult issue. And in the short session too!

I hope you consider this as a Bi-partisan Step 1 that continues with more bills in the very near future that move our addicted population towards treatment.

Everything you saw in more successful models in Europe and elsewhere shows that there can be 2 parallel tracks- the criminal side for those that deal and "entice to harm" our population and our children, and the health support side for those that are ill already.

But this decoupling only works if there is:

1. TRUE incentives and inducement to go into treatment long-term to get on top of the illness, AND
2. Sufficient health system support for doing so, so they can choose the option to get well.

\*\*\*Unfortunately we have County leadership that continually fails to provide the support side in a timely, properly funded manner. So I ask that you please make sure to guarantee that health side through sincere carrots and sticks!

We know that people trapped in the addiction drug cycle cannot think long-term health. They only see the horrible, painful withdrawal. Most will not willingly opt to dry out and drugs are just too damned cheap a way to avoid that pain. They simply are not in a clear mental state to make healthy decisions for themselves. This is NOT respecting these individuals; it's keeping them locked dare I say imprisoned in the cycles they've slipped into for whatever reason. They do not have to be behind bars!

So I am still highly concerned with the softening of the required treatment option. I understand that this makes the bill work for many, But please work on that end to strengthen the regulations about hospitalizing folks who cannot care for themselves, and those who may harm both themselves and the public.

Please be audacious about assisting them with more bills that help them step up to a better life,

Loni