

Submitter: Kathi Futornick

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

HB 4002 should not recriminalize hard drugs for the user. Recriminalization of small amounts of drug use should not be on the table. The recriminalization of hard drugs should be at the dealer level and at the supplier level.

I agree that the citation system as implemented now does not work; however, establishing and funding a "drug court" might work. Here a group of professionals would act as triage and recommend a fine, treatment, or more specific measures. A drug court, as in the case of Oregon's Juvenile Court program, would review the cases of a drug user and make decisions. By not recriminalizing small amounts of drugs, legal counsel would not be needed, thereby not further straining the public defenders program. The user could be represented by an advocate, or an interested party.

Furthermore, geography-based access to justice is no justice at all. I can't imagine how difficult it will be for anyone to navigate this kind of system.

Lawmakers also continue to ignore the fact that there will be no public defense attorneys available any time soon for the likely thousands of new cases that recriminalization will inject into the criminal system. Oregon's public defender system is last in the nation - and legislators have ignored the need to improve the system and it doesn't seem to be on the table anytime soon.

HB 4002 should focus on treatment, housing, support systems, their timely implementation, their funding, and accountability to ensure that the taxpayer dollar is being used appropriately.

HB 4002 should not ban the use of hard drugs in public. Drug users tend to be houseless - this is a non-starter. Support units rely on witnessing drug use in order to offer alternatives. If not in public, then how will support units make initial contact and offer assistance?

HB 4002 gives police and prosecutors stronger laws which Oregon does not need. The stronger laws in HB 4002 will dehumanize, punish those in need, and similar laws have not historically made one bit of difference to the drug trade other than pander to those who brought forth HB 4002 which allows them to "feel good". Oregon doesn't need the privileged few running roughshod over the rest of us.

Let's remember that Measure 110 was a ballot measure supported by over 58% of

Oregonians. We wanted something better than what we had prior to Measure 110. It will be a slap in the face to the majority of Oregonians if something as draconian as HB 4002 goes into law. The amount of public interest should be an indication that a "short session" is not where a decision as important as this one should be made. Please address this issue in the full session where it can be properly vetted.

Thank you for your time and interest.