Submitter: Amy Carlson

On Behalf Of: Vote NO on HB 4002 -24

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

I am a constituent and advocate for community safety for all Oregonians, including people experiencing houselessness. I am disappointed to see our state pursue harmful criminalization policies instead of taking meaningful action to improve access to addiction treatment services and housing for Oregonians.

I strongly urge lawmakers to follow the evidence and the data: Decades of failed drug war policies tell us that sending people to jail for having an addiction will not solve our problems.

M110 and decriminalized drug possession did not fail. But Oregon never fully committed to the coordination, associated investments and support, and timeframe needed to implement it, leading to a lack of needed support for those struggling with addiction. That's why I strongly oppose HB 4002 and the -24 amendment.

Addiction is a health issue, not a crime, but HB 4002 -24 criminalizes people who are suffering from two crises: addiction and Oregon's gaps in services.

A return to criminalizing addiction is dangerous. We know from our country's recent history and failed drug war policies that communities of color and other historically underserved populations will be disproportionately impacted and most at-risk of over-policing and incarceration.

The addiction crisis demands action, but we cannot punish people for our state's failures. People need rapid access to care, mobile crisis outreach, and a diversity of housing solutions. And most critically, Oregonians need more treatment options. Many of these efforts are underway - due largely to Measure 110 as enacted by Oregon voters - but given that the gaps in services were so vast, there's much more to be done.

Real solutions exist. In the meantime, we cannot punish the people who are victims of our service gaps. I urge you to oppose HB 4002 -24 and to support continued investment in essential services.

Sincerely,

Amy Carlson