

Submitter: Marci Jory

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

I voted yes on Measure 110. Like many others, I was hopeful for reform in the way our state treats those suffering from addiction. My 26 year old son, at the time, was 2 years clean from a methamphetamine and heroin addiction that began when he was 19 years old. He spent time in prison during his early 20's for drug related crimes and I had always been frustrated that our system seemed to be designed in a way to keep those suffering from addiction stuck in the cycle of drug use, criminality, and prison. He was denied drug court and instead spent a year and a half in prison and used drugs the entire time he was incarcerated. After my son found recovery in CSAP, Clackamas Substance Abuse Program, through Clackamas County, we finally had him back. At least for a while.

When measure 110 was being promoted, I read about other places that seemed to have had great success in the fight against addiction by decriminalizing drug use. I was confident that voting yes on measure 110 was the only right choice. What happened over the following years, proved me wrong in many heartbreaking ways. I was unaware that without the infrastructure available to help get people suffering from addiction on the streets and into a program, this measure would have devastating effects on my family and my community.

The lack of infrastructure and drug treatment facilities in Oregon, coupled with a breakdown of community and support during the COVID pandemic has magnified the impact measure 110 has had in communities. Many of my son's friends from treatment have relapsed and too many have died from Fentanyl overdoses. These are young men in their 20's. These young men are leaving their mothers, partners, and young children behind to pick up the pieces. In 2020 my son and his partner also relapsed which predicated his partner's children being placed into the foster care system, my granddaughter being born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and my son now being unhoused and on the streets in his addiction.

My husband and I are raising our granddaughter, now almost 2, who was immediately placed in ODHS care and we are now working on the adoption process. My granddaughter will likely never know her biological father and mother. When I look at her, I see my son. I see the life I wish he would have had.

No one can point to one thing that causes someone to relapse or become addicted to drugs. But decriminalizing drugs without the proper safety nets in place was irresponsible and has irreversibly contributed to the destruction of families and

communities. It has contributed to the epidemics of homelessness and overdose deaths.

As a mother, I could never have imagined the grief, fear, anxiety, and sense of loss that accompanies loving a child who grows up to suffer from addiction. No one can help me overcome the intense sadness when I reflect back and think of all of the hopes, dreams, and memories of my young child. It is impossible to understand the effect of flashbacks to points in time when one wonders if and when they could have stopped this disease in its tracks. Measure 110 didn't help anyone. It didn't help those with substance use disorder. It didn't help their families. It didn't provide more access to care and treatment. It didn't do what it was supposed to do. I support HB 4002. It is imperative that OHA study and help find solutions for Oregon's Addiction crisis. Thank you.