

Submitter: Andrew Becker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

At the very least, this bill should only apply increased penalties to drugs that are causing serious problems with overdose deaths and addiction right now (such as fentanyl and meth) and not to others (such as psychedelic mushrooms and LSD) which show little to no addictive potential and no correlation with crime.

However, it's imperative to note that almost a hundred years of a War on Drugs has produced no benefits and is accurately regarded as an extremely expensive failure. Before any legislator votes for this bill, they should be required to first tell the voters:

1. How many police man-hours YOU want to siphon away from violent and property crime cases to go towards drug enforcement instead?
2. Which budgets will YOU cut to fund an already failed approach to drugs?

Proponents of this bill, police organizations, and lazy or sensationalist journalists cite Oregon's high rate of increase in OD deaths as an evident failure of Measure 110. What they all conveniently ignore is that the CDC's data clearly shows that 2/3rds of states have a higher OD death rate per capita than Oregon, and that there's only a 0.1 per 10,000 people difference between OD death rates in Washington, Oregon, and California. They also conveniently gloss over the fact that every state in the country saw a spike in OD rates following the pandemic, and that Washington's spike was nearly identical to ours despite not having a Measure 110. This is more than highly deceptive on their part, it is lying (at least by omission). That's just the meaning of the word, we don't have to sugarcoat it.

Proponents of this bill imply or even assert that Measure 110 has caused crime to increase in Oregon. However, the latest FBI data shows a 15% decrease in violent crime and a 19% decrease in property crime in Oregon. Both of those numbers handily outpace both the national and the West Coast averages for change in crime rate. That FBI statistical reporting period also correlates to when Measure 110 funds started being distributed in earnest. I'm not saying you have to credit Measure 110 with all of that decrease, but the police and media sure as hell have tried to find any way to blame all crime on Measure 110, so they need to take their medicine on what the numbers actually show now. Anybody who's gone around blaming crime on Measure 110 now has to be honest and do a 180, instead crediting Measure 110 for reducing crime — else they're exposed as disingenuous.

It's time for legislators to start legislating from evidence-based positions. Tell us how taking police time away from violent and property crime is going to help things. Tell

us how wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on a Drug War policy that's never worked anywhere, including here, is going to magically not be a waste of money this time. Tell us what budgets you'll cut to get those funds.