

Submitter: Jan Nolley

On Behalf Of: Oppose 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. I am disappointed and saddened to see our state pursue harmful criminalization policies instead of taking meaningful action to increase access to addiction treatment services and housing for Oregonians. And although Rep. Gamba answered a previous email about the complexity of the issue, I feel I need to reiterate my concern.

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 implementing 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.

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 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.

I watched this once before. In the 70's state mental institutions were closed with the promises of large community mental health facilities to follow to provide services. Those facilities never materialized and it was the beginning of our current homeless crisis. Indeed there may still be some of those who were deinstitutionalized that are the aged unhoused.

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,

Jan Nolley