

Chairs Lieber, Kropf, and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today regarding HB 4002.

Oregon currently faces a drug crisis we have never seen before. We lead the nation in overdoses and fentanyl-related deaths. This is unacceptable; something needs to be done. Since the passage and implementation of Ballot Measure 110, we have seen public drug use rise, an increase in homelessness, a rise in drug-related deaths, and a rise in crime. This has happened across Oregon, but some areas have been hit harder than others. Portland is not the city it used to be. Homeless camps everywhere, rampant drug use, and increased crime. This has led to people leaving the city and the state. Portland State University has seen a decrease in enrollment. Simply put, people do not feel safe in Portland anymore. The decrease in population isn't just seen in Portland, though. It is being seen and felt all across the state. While we do not know if Measure 110 contributed to the decrease in population, it certainly did not help.

I firmly support HB 4002. This bill is not perfect by any means. Nothing in life is perfect. In a democracy, you have to be willing to make compromises, and I believe the drafters of this bill did just that. This bill seems to be a compromise between the Democratic proposal and the Republican proposal. While I and many others favored the Republican proposal, I'm inclined to support the current proposal.

Here are just a few reasons why I support this bill:

- Recriminalizes hard drugs. This sends a clear message drug use is harmful and has consequences. It sends a clear message that drugs do not belong in our communities.
- It gives prosecutors and judges an option when sentencing. Either six months in jail or MANDATORY SUPERVISED treatment!
- Replaces voluntary treatment with REQUIRED EVIDENCE-BASED treatment.
- It gives law enforcement the tools they have been crying out for to help those in need and get drugs off the streets and out of our communities.
- It gives prosecutors the tools to go after drug dealers and traffickers. It sends a clear message to the dealers and traffickers that dealing drugs in Oregon will not be tolerated, and perpetrators will be caught!
- This bill is backed by police, first responders, cities, counties, the business community, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and, more importantly, a vast majority of Oregonians from across the state!

The far-left will argue this bill will hurt people suffering from addiction. This could not be further from the truth. It will give those suffering from addiction the help they need and provide them with a wake-up that it's time to get help. There are numerous stories of former addicts thanking their arresting officer after getting treatment and help. They said being arrested was the best thing that happened to them. They said this because it gave them a wake-up call that it was time to get help and their previous lifestyle was no way to live. These people are now successful members of society, and many are working to help those suffering from addiction.

I urge the committee to pass HB 4002 and send it to the entire Legislature for swift passage so we can begin to implement it for a successful rollout.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today!
John H. Meissinger IV