



February 26, 2024

Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Opposition of HB 4002-24

Co-Chairs Lieber and Kropf, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, my name is Kennedy Parish. I am the Communications Associate for the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon, and I provide this testimony as a representative of the ACLU of Oregon today. **I strongly oppose House Bill 4002-24.**

I come from a family with struggles and deep vulnerability to drug addiction and witnessed my father being incarcerated at five years old. By my own experience and awareness of the terror and pain for Black and Brown Americans from the failed war on drugs, there is a lack of morality, practicality, and care for Oregonians in this bill.

HB 4002-24 advocates for deflection, yet **few** deflection programs exist, and the bill does not require more to be created. Even if programs are created, counties, police, and prosecutors would get to choose who is offered treatment versus jail: This means that people with money, connections, or racial privilege will be more likely to get into limited treatment spaces. Black, brown, low-income, and disabled people will continue to be jailed at the highest rates.

Arresting Oregonians will overload our criminal justice system with thousands of new, low-level, victimless cases where people are charged, receive minimal access to treatment, undergo severe separation from friends and family, and are released with life-damaging criminal records that will make it more difficult to get housing, government assistance, jobs, and education.

These examples are **only a glance** at the devastation and pain that will unfold from arresting, criminalizing, and traumatizing Oregonians who need care, not jails.

By opposing HB 4002-24, you have an opportunity to acknowledge that addiction is a public health issue, not a criminal one. I urge you to act with your conscience, courage, and compassion by voting no. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Kennedy Parish, Communication and Storytelling Associate

For more questions, please email Jessica Maravilla, Policy Director at jmaravilla@aclu-or.org