

Submitter: Ana Woodburn

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

Hello,

I'd like to provide some resources and information as to why substance use should be treated as a public health issue. According to MHACBO, NSDUH 2021 Report Oregon is 1st in the country for illicit substance use disorder and 50th in the country for access to care. That data references 2019-2020 - which both hopefully have shifted since then. How long does it typically take to pass legislation? And how often is it even done in one regular session? M110 passed in 2020, and the funds were delayed, so agencies have since had 2 years (through a pandemic) to build buildings, hire staff (staff that is hard to get because of housing costs), train staff, among all of the other intricacies of changes such as this. One center in Bend got funded in 2021 and the building just finished. We are not going to see a change that quickly.

Many overdose fatalities are those who live in private housing, because they are alone, unhoused folks tend to be in groups and have someone nearby to save them. Recriminalizing simple possession will decrease sample testing - which affords us to know what substances are in geographic areas in order to respond, train, and resource in a strategic way. It will also lead to more criminal charges > less housing and job options. Our jails are also not well staffed, and someone getting into treatment (if there is even a bed available) with nowhere to go post-treatment does not solve this problem. Additionally, people in Oregon are 10 times more likely to die of an overdose post-incarceration.

Many people get to have their best and worst moments indoors, it does not mean they don't use drugs, it means they have privacy many cannot afford. An already marginalized group of people - who can't go inside - will be disproportionately affected by this bill.

We may have put the cart before the horse, decriminalizing before funding began, but we just need more time. Please allow us this. I am a constituent who is extremely disappointed and saddened to see state leaders pursue harmful criminalization policies instead of taking meaningful action to increase access to treatment services and housing for Oregonians.

I strongly oppose HB 4002 for failing to consider the Oregonians most at-risk of over-policing and government harm: Black and brown people, Indigenous Oregonians, low-income Oregonians, and rural Oregonians. HB 4002 -24 embraces a dangerous and damaging criminalization approach at the expense of the safety, health, and well-being of Black and brown communities. That's unacceptable.