

Submitter: Christopher Doo
On Behalf Of: Don't criminalize addiction
Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
Measure: HB4002

"Hello, I am a local resident who wants us all to live in a community that we feel safe in and that allows for us meaningful ways to choose to participate.

I don't think it's the government's right to control how we use our bodies (with consent), which includes what we put into them. Criminalization proposals like HB 4002 and HB 4036 make things worse. If you truly care about the wellbeing of our neighbors, we should focus on having sufficient accessible (affordable) housing and healthcare, including policies that support meaningful action increasing access to treatment services.

If anything, HB 4002, and the creation of government policies for the benefits of the special interests behind amendment -24, for example, should be criminal for infringing on the rights of others. I don't like seeing the people living on the streets, many of them seem troubled to me, but they (other people) have more of a right to somewhere safe to sleep (that isn't a cage) than I have a right to comfort when going from my car to work or a restaurant. I think it's reasonable to say that we can create policies which support both - those of us with stable housing can be safe, those of us who aren't afflicted with addiction, and people currently without stable housing and/or who are dealing with addiction, can be safe. There are more humane possibilities that could be implemented, with access to sustainable (long-term) housing and healthcare FIRST. Let's reserve criminalization and incarceration for people who infringe on other's rights to live without undue control and influence - whether from the government or others.

Policy being created by prosecutors and law enforcement doesn't sound like by and for the people to me. Equal access to deflection programs sounds more in accord with America's values than HB 4002. I don't have the life experience of having lived on the street, and I hope people who have had those experiences are included in the formation of policies that will mostly effect them or people with similar experiences. Have you ever imagined how hard it must be to get off of drugs while not even having stable housing? I know people with comfortable home-lives who can't get off alcohol, caffeine, or their cell-phones. Imagine having to stay awake all night because you don't even have a door to close let alone a door to lock. Let's try something different, let's try sufficient healthcare and housing before locking people away. We can do better.

Criminalizing healthcare issues isn't the way to go, and HB 4002 does more harm

than good. Please use your influence to actually support (not harm) people struggling with addiction and houselessness in support of us all having better lives."