



February 26, 2024

Joint Interim Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: NO on any form of criminalization and forced treatment, including HB 4002-24

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Kropf and Committee Members,

I am Sandy Chung, Executive Director of the ACLU of Oregon. The ACLU of Oregon is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to defending and advancing our democracy, civil liberties, and civil rights, with more than 27,000 members statewide.

Civil rights lawyer Michelle Alexander wrote in her book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Time of Color Blindness" the following:

"Although the political dynamics that gave birth to the system date back to slavery, the drug war marked an important turning point in American history, one that cannot be measured simply by counting heads in prisons and jails. The declaration and escalation of the War on Drugs marked a moment in our past when a group of people defined by race and class was viewed and treated as the "enemy." A literal war was declared on a highly vulnerable population, leading to a wave of punitiveness that permeated every aspect of our criminal justice system and redefined the scope of fundamental constitutional rights. The war mentality resulted in the militarization of local police departments and billions invested in drug law enforcement at the state and local levels. It also contributed to astronomical expenditures for prison building for people convicted of crimes and the slashing of billions from education, public housing and welfare programs, as well as a slew of legislation authorizing legal discrimination against millions of people accused of drug offenses, denying them access to housing, food stamps, credit, basic public benefits, and financial aid for schooling. This war did not merely increase the number of people in prisons and jails. It radically altered the life course of millions, especially black men who were the primary targets in the first decades of the war. Their lives and families were destroyed for drug crimes that were largely ignored on the other side of town."

When Measure 110 was passed by Oregonians, we chose to step forward in the arc of history – towards justice.

With HB 4002-24, the Oregon legislature is proposing to step backwards and restart the war on drugs in Oregon.

During a meeting last week, Governor Kotek told racial justice groups that good policy is good politics.

The reality is, this bill is incredibly bad politics because HB 4002-24 is massively bad policy. Lawmakers cannot change bad policy by simply saying it isn't so.

The ACLU of Oregon urges you to vote for an Oregon filled with healing and thriving communities, not more jails and prisons.

Please vote NO to any form of criminalization or forced treatment, including HB 4002-24, as well as any and all amendments to HB 4002 that criminalize in any way user-level possession or use of banned substances, force treatment on people, or now or in the future lower or divert funding from treatment, housing, and related social services.

Sandy Chung (she,her)
Executive Director
ACLU of Oregon