Submitter: Ruth Fredine

On Behalf Of: Treatment beds not jail beds

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure: HB4002

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.

Just like the hundreds of Oregonians who submitted testimony earlier this month against harmful criminalization proposals, including HB 4002 and HB 4036, I strongly urge lawmakers to follow the evidence and the data: decades of the failed war on drugs tell us that sending people to jail for having an addiction only ruins lives.

The latest version of HB 4002 -24 also creates massive inequities between counties. People who live in counties without a deflection program will face immediate HB 4002 arrests while people living just a few miles away will be offered connection to treatment. Your zip code shouldn’t determine your ability to access treatment services. An easy fix to this would be to simply require all counties to set up deflection programs.

I've heard legislators call HB 4002 a treatment-first approach, but that's simply not true. The bill as written will send people struggling with addiction to jail and saddle them with criminal records. HB 4002 fails to meet the tremendous need for detox and treatment services across our state and represents a costly and damaging return to the war on drugs - no matter what you call it.

Oregonians deserve better than HB 4002.