

To Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am a member of two organizations that seek smart criminal justice reform. SB 1553 is not a smart bill and should not be passed.

I myself have never seen anyone doing drugs on the buses, MAX and streetcars that I ride, so I question whether this is a major problem. It is unnecessary to add drug use as a separate specific crime to existing legislation addressing “disorderly conduct” on public transit, as transit officers already are able to address any dangerous behavior affecting other passengers, resulting from drug use or anything else.

A year incarceration or a huge fine or both, which would result from a Class A Misdemeanor, would not help someone who suffers from substance abuse to solve their problems. And it will undoubtedly be poor people and other marginalized individuals who will end up with such punishments, especially considering Oregon's crisis of a lack of public defenders to represent these arrestees. The people voted for Measure 110 because they wanted users to not be criminalized and to make much more treatment available to those who want help, and for that help to be non-punitive and address other problems users were having. This transit legislation ignores M.110's call.

SB 1553 goes back to the old unsuccessful ways of dealing with addiction. That's not smart.

.