

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber, Representative Jason Kropf, and committee members,

Thank you for providing another opportunity for Oregonians and organizations to provide their input on HB 4002. The Rogue Action Center is opposed to the recriminalization of the possession of small amounts of drugs and public use outlined in this bill and we are disappointed to see this moving forward out of committee.

Our organization stands with the ACLU, Unite Oregon, the Family Nurturing Center, the public defenders, and many individual Oregonians who spoke in opposition to these bills. We listened to the people of color who spoke up during the February 7th hearing urging this committee to remember the disproportionate harm criminalization causes them. We urge you, our electeds, to not only respect the will of the voters who let you know criminalization was no longer the way Oregon should handle substance use disorder but also to heed the testimony of those who shared the impact that the last 50 years of the war on drugs has had on them.

Let's instead focus on the root causes of the crisis we're facing: a dearth of affordable housing, extreme poverty, and insufficient and inconsistent resources. Each dollar spent on incarceration is just another dollar not spent on the behavioral health services that we desperately need. Allowing M110 the time to fund and expand these services throughout Oregon is the only way to find solutions we can all agree on.

We cannot arrest our way out of poverty, the housing crisis, or addiction. Please vote no on any bill that includes recriminalization.

Thank you,
Rebecca Pearson
Co-Executive Director, Rogue Action Center