

To: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response
From: Eleanor Ponomareff, Talent City Council
Subject: Opposition to HB 4002
Date: February 27, 2024

Co-Chairs Leiber and Kropf, Members of the Committee,

I am a member of the Talent City Council, now in my second term, speaking on behalf of myself, and my constituents.

I am once again testifying in **strong opposition to the recriminalization portion of HB 4002**, which would only worsen the same crises the bill claims to address, by returning to the failed and harmful practices of the War on Drugs, and weakening the most vital connection to recovery, that of trust.

We need to do the math. Every dollar spent on criminalizing substance use disorder not only robs public health services of that dollar but **further increases the workload that treatment services will ultimately need to meet**. Incarceration is punishment, and as such, can only harm. Incarceration increases the work of public health services by inflicting ***additional trauma on those individuals with substance use disorder, their families, and our communities***.

There is another way.

Here in rural Southern Oregon, our community responded to the crisis of the Labor Day fires by creating an infrastructure of support. We stood up mutual aid sites; we delivered meals to people's doorsteps; we found solutions that worked. We came together as a community, respecting the dignity of every survivor, and became more resilient for it. That is how communities heal.

The dual crisis of addiction and homelessness requires real solutions of housing and behavioral health services – both of which are sorely lacking here in rural Southern Oregon.

Please reject the recriminalization portion of this bill. We need to fund real solutions, not more jails.

Thank you for your good work.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Ponomareff
Talent City Council, Position #5
Talent, Oregon