

Submitter: Michelle Barnes
On Behalf Of: Salem
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1583

My name is Michelle Barnes, I have a little more than 2 years clean off fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, DMT, and Marijuana. I wouldn't have made without the assistance of a Certified Recovery Mentor/ Peer Support Specialist and the programs that employ them. My mentor assisted me with getting into a facility to face my mental health problems and helped me to find stable and suitable permanent housing. She also connected me with treatment resources to face my drug addiction problems and today I am gainfully employed and not receiving any state assistance other than the housing assistance I was approved for to find a pathway to permanent housing. My mentor assisted me in getting to and from appointments and NA meetings and having her to offer support when things were difficult and I was in need of support. This community needs resources that help people face their problems in a healthy manner instead of locking people up and never giving them the support it takes to change a life. Prison isn't the answer. Building our programs to address these problems in society is a better way. I think the justice system can be used to force people into treatment and other services is better than just criminalizing behaviors. With out my mentor and housing support I would have found the life I live today. I would hate to see the very programs that saved my life become nonexistent for others when they are at their worst. Thank you for your time.