

Submitter:

Michelle Gunstrom-Petr

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1583

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, I am writing in opposition to SB 1583. This bill would destabilize the systems of care built under Measure 110 by shifting oversight and funding in a way that disrupts treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and deflection services. Providers and communities have spent years building capacity and trust. Abrupt structural changes make it harder to deliver consistent care and risk leaving people without the services they need. Oregon should focus on strengthening existing programs and improving data systems not creating instability through major governance shifts. I urge you to oppose SB 1583. I have been in recovery for 17 years. But before that, I struggled with a heavy addiction and criminal issues for 9 years. My journey with addiction began when I was just 11 years old. Growing up, my father was absent and in prison, and my mother, who was also an addict, raised me alone. I spent my childhood searching for love and connection, and I thought the only way to find it was by using substances with my mother. This path led me nowhere good. I was a kid who desperately needed a role model and guidance but had no one to turn to and I wish that there were Peers like we have today through M110 to walk alongside me and supply me with the knowledge they learned in their journey, guide me to the support that I truly needed that was not institutions. I spent years in and out of secure facilities, followed by immediate rehab. When I was 19, I got pregnant with my first child, and something clicked. I realized I needed to get clean because I didn't want to be the kind of mother my mother was. Getting clean wasn't easy. It came with many highs and lows. All I knew was the life of addiction, and adapting to a clean life was hard. I struggled to do things alone and stay clean, but I had goals to break generational curses. I wanted to become the person I needed when I was a child, someone who could provide support and guidance to young people who might be going through similar struggles. These things were nearly unmanageable to do alone a peer would have helped me through the hardest part of this, but peers were not available then and not everyone can stay grounded in recovery alone and need that positive support and role model to hold them accountable and provide compassion to things they are facing. Today, I am 17 years clean. I have had my record expunged, own a home, and have a family. I have gained certifications as a recovery mentor and peer support specialist and have worked in this field for several years now and I now work for a company that provides the same services I once needed as a youth and walls that I had to visit back in 2003. These are all things I never thought I would live long enough to see. If you take anything away from what I shared here today, I hope that you stand beside us in opposing to change funding through M110. This will cause significant loss to the individuals who are still struggling. The world is a scary place right now, some of these individuals only have their peer support to lean on. There are people like us out

here, ready to show up, be that support, guidance, and role model that those still struggling need without judgment but with knowledge, direction and ability to connect to the positive life changing support they need. Thank you for considering my testimony.