



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 29, 2024

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation – HB 4002 A

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I voted in support of HB 4002 because I believe it represents an improvement to the untenable status quo. I am particularly heartened by our accompanying funding bill, HB 5204, which allocates \$211 million to fund deflection programs operated by local governments and will also fund needed additional behavioral health services.


I am not at all happy about the inequities of our addictions treatment system and our justice system. None of us should be. Over the last 50 years, our nation's war on drugs has led to mass incarceration and torn apart families affected by addictions. Our communities of color have suffered disproportionately, and unconscionably, by our failure to treat addictions as a healthcare issue. We as a society must address this pervasive and pernicious racism.

Criminalization of addictions will impact people's lives forever, especially people of low incomes and people of color. I commit to closely monitor the on the ground impact of HB 4002 to ensure that these disparities are lessened and ultimately eliminated. Justice requires that we do not go backwards in protecting Measure 110's intent of creating a rehabilitative justice system, access to recovery treatment services, transitional housing, and expanding harm reduction efforts.

With the passage of HB 4002, our work is not done. We must be ^{SC} ~~become~~ especially vigilant in collecting and responding to the on the ground data that will tell us whether more people are successfully accessing services. More specifically, we must all meet multiple challenges before us, including taking legislative action to help:

- Recruit and retain more public defenders -- such as law school loan forgiveness programs and state bar admission changes.
- Ensure there is dedicated funding for services for family members and children who experience addictions related trauma.
- Keep our eyes on the long-term prize of addictions treatment as an "on demand" service that is available in every county of Oregon and for every member of community, rich or poor. Our addictions services should be funded as a core healthcare benefit through both our Medicaid/OHP and our commercial insurance systems (and not as special, one-time budget appropriations).

I pledge to remain vigilant in monitoring the impacts of our vote today and to make any needed humane, practical, and compassionate changes to effectively address the public health crisis we face.


Representative Tom Andersen

