



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 29, 2024

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

RE: Vote Explanation on House Bill 4002 – (A).

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Please accept this letter as my official vote explanation on House Bill 4002 - (A).

In my district, the dual crises of addiction and housing have deeply affected our community, leading to unsafe streets and the tragic loss of young individuals to substances like Fentanyl. My engagement with constituents and the Oregon Recovery Community has highlighted the courage of those fighting addiction and the critical need for a supportive hand in their journey towards recovery.

The bill under consideration, proposes measures I value, including the expansion of medication-assisted treatment, investment in youth drug addiction treatment, prevention programs, and the construction of mental health and addiction treatment facilities. It also suggests a deflection program and automatic expungement to mitigate the harms of incarceration for individuals struggling with addiction.

However, the recent amendment that removes the requirement for mandatory deflection raises significant concerns for me. It suggests a shift away from prioritizing treatment, potentially creating barriers for individuals in need of help, contrary to our main objective.

Reflecting on the broader context, our community's struggle is a symptom of decades-long disinvestment in critical services. We rank 47th in the nation for access to addiction treatment, a testament to the magnitude of the challenge ahead. Moreover, the enduring housing crisis and the negative impacts of the War on Drugs, including the disproportionate incarceration of low income and communities of color, have compounded these issues.

The financial implications of expanding the misdemeanor system—and paying for additional prosecutors, public defenders, and probation officers—will likely divert resources from essential services such as treatment and housing support.



KHANH PHAM
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 46



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Reflecting on all I have heard and learned, I believe my community will best be served by a more comprehensive public health approach, not a return to criminalization that lacks mandatory deflections. For these reasons, I'll be respectfully voting No today. Respectfully submitted into the House record.

Sincerely,

Khanh Pham
State Representative HD-46

