

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

My name is Alison Leonard and I live in Jackson County. For the past 6 months I have been working for a statewide disaster recovery program to support those who are struggling because of COVID-19 or who were impacted by the Wildfires in Sept of last year. In this work, we can see first hand the impact of addiction in peoples life. Faced with losses due to COVID or losing a home in fire, individuals dealing with addiction are much worse off, and much less able to navigate themselves back to a stable life. They struggle to navigate the bureaucracy of disaster assistance, because their first struggle each day is dealing with their addiction. These individuals' most primary need is treatment and support for the long path of substance abuse recovery.

The pandemic has exacerbated the consequences of addiction, and it's prevalence. New data from the Oregon Health Authority show that drug overdose deaths in Oregon were up 70 percent this spring compared to that same time last year. This shows the way that addiction follows stress and the mental strain of difficult life situations. Treating people battling substance abuse as criminals has not worked. Substance abuse is a health issue, not a crime.

Oregon voters voted overwhelmingly for Measure 110. It's critical that we fund the bill fully. The community services described by Measure 110 will help all Oregonians, and in particular our most vulnerable community members.