

ALBIES & STARK  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

J. Ashlee Albies  
ashlee@albiesstark.com

1 SW Columbia St., Suite 1850  
Portland, OR 97204  
Phone: 503-308-4773  
Fax: 503-427-9292

she/hers

March 14, 2021

Via electronic submission

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

I have been a practicing civil rights attorney in Portland for 15 years. I'm also a Multnomah County resident and community member. I have family, friends, clients, and community members who struggle with addiction.

I supported Ballot Measure 110 because of the devastating impact disparate enforcement of criminal drug laws have on Black, Indigenous and communities of color in Oregon. As an attorney, I have worked with people and their families who struggle with addiction, many times because of unnecessary interaction with police. In my personal life, I have family members who struggle with addiction, and it seems like every day I read a story in the news about a family or person struggling with addiction. This is not an individual issue - it impacts entire families and entire communities and it needs a community response, grounded in humanizing rather than dehumanizing people with addiction, and getting them access to treatment.

In my experience, incarcerating people who have substance abuse issues often does not have a positive impact. While sometimes it can be a gateway to treatment, it also leaves people with criminal convictions worse off in terms of their prospects for jobs, housing, and community service. Moreover, Black, Indigenous, and people of color are overrepresented in the criminal legal system and underrepresented in the healthcare system. We need to change this. Growing up in a middle class, predominately white suburb, I know many middle-class white people who struggled with addiction and were able to easily get treatment and services. I have seen firsthand how a human centered approach, rather than a punitive criminalizing approach to addiction, can and does save lives. When people are treated with dignity and respect, and addiction is treated like the health issue it is, it can restore people's faith in themselves and lead to positive outcomes.

The pandemic has furthered economic instability, which exacerbates the risk of harm for people with addiction. New data from the Oregon Health Authority shows that drug overdose deaths in Oregon were up 70 percent this spring compared to that same time last year. Now is the time to act. Please support funding for these measures that will positively benefit all Oregonians.

Very truly yours,

**ALBIES & STARK**



J. Ashlee Albies