

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

My name is Aaron Epperson, and I am a lifelong Oregonian. While I now live in Milwaukie, I was raised in Prineville. Sadly, my family has not been spared the cruel realities of addiction. Neither were the families of my childhood friends.

Rural Oregon faces many issues. Poverty, however, is its most deadly foe. According to a 2018 study by the United Way, more than half of Oregonians in Crook County have trouble paying for rent and utilities even when they have jobs. This, of course, does not include the impact of COVID-19, so we should assume things are worse. <https://www.unitedforalice.org/oregon>

I mention poverty because it is deeply tied to addiction. Meaning that the bondage of poverty destroys hope, with many succumbing to drugs to dull their hurt and pain. Many families bear this burden over generations, like my own. While decriminalization is a huge step forward - it will not be enough. We must commit to helping Oregonians gain freedom from the burden of untreated addiction. Ballot Measure 110, properly implemented, can help us do this.

SB 755 increase access to needed treatment and services to those in need. Voting no guarantees a cycle of failure. Not only for those who struggle with addiction - but for all of us. I ask that you pass SB 755.

Sincerely,

Aaron Epperson
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