

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

My name is Anna Knierim and I am a Community Organizer for the Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act at Unite Oregon. I care deeply about seeing Senate Bill 755 funded and implemented fully. Providing more treatment and recovery services is a matter of life and death for many Oregonians. Addiction is a health condition that can be healed when treated with compassion and access to trauma-informed and culturally relevant services.

I've worked in social services for many years and have seen the crisis facing so many of our community members who need to receive help for their addiction. One day, while working at a shelter for people experiencing homelessness, I found a client falling over a picnic table, unresponsive and near death from drug overdose. We called for emergency services. Thankfully, because our staff and the EMTs responded quickly, this person was able to live. However, for so many clients, the story doesn't end here. There are so many stories that include many overdoses and no actual healing, because services are extremely hard to get. Whether it's insurance issues or a waitlist that is months long, what I heard continually was that help was not available. The need for treatment and recovery services is urgent and ongoing. Each day one to two Oregonians die from overdose. How many lives will it take before we care? Before we take the steps towards the solutions in front of us!

Oregonians overwhelmingly voted for this because our loved ones, or colleagues, our clients, our neighbors and friends face these struggles daily. We ask that when considering the budget, you consider these lives that have been lost and make the right choice. I could talk about how repeated calls for emergency services are more expensive than treatment, but I don't want to talk about money. I want to talk about our lives. As fellow Oregonians, I ask that you support the full funding and implementation of Measure 110, without delay. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Anna Knierim