



Testimony for SB 755 – implementing funding for Measure 110
from the Justice Study Group of Multnomah County Democratic Party's Platform Committee

Oregon is a leader! Over 58% of Oregon voters understood that criminalizing personal use of drugs was unfair and unproductive, and that it disproportionately punished people of color and poor people and contributed to mass incarceration. Oregon voters also said that anyone who wants substance abuse treatment should be able to get it in our state. They understood that drug addiction is a health issue, not a criminal issue.

Individuals with substance use disorder should have access to evidence-based treatment. So now let's implement the funding part of Measure 110. Oregon has been behind in providing drug treatment to those who want and need it, especially in our rural areas. The perfect sources of funding for treatment are a portion of tax revenue from marijuana sales (beyond the amount already earmarked for other programs) and State savings from resulting reductions in arrests, incarceration, and official supervision. This funding can provide for the treatment centers that are needed all over our state to fulfill Measure 110. The people voted for this, so the Legislature should make sure it happens, and without delay.

We also strongly recommend amending the bill to enable anyone to now expunge their records who was previously convicted of possession of the amounts of controlled substances covered by Measure 110. If Oregon no longer considers possession of those personal amounts a crime, then it should apply retroactively and end ongoing punishments many individuals suffer regarding housing and jobs and other limits to their full participation in society.

The Justice Study Group, which is part of the Platform Committee of Multnomah County Democratic Party, strongly supports SB 755, which is in line with the Preamble and several Planks in the Justice section of our Platform:

Preamble:

The criminal justice system should be reformed so that it operates fairly and equitably, while respecting the dignity and humanity of those interacting with the system. We oppose a criminal justice system that discriminates against people of color and poor people, fails to recognize addiction as a public health issue, promotes mass incarceration and punishment instead of rehabilitation, militarizes the police, fails to meet the needs of individuals returning from incarceration, and fails to adequately fund services that help prevent crime. We call up our government to examine the system's failings and provide laws and funding to prevent its problems.

Planks:

20. We believe drug addiction should be treated as a public health issue and managed in the community whenever possible, with more robust funding for treatment. All drug use and possession should be decriminalized, and distribution should be regulated.

25. We support more funding of programs that facilitate the integration of previously incarcerated people into society. We oppose unnecessary discrimination in housing and in educational and job opportunities which unfairly burdens formerly incarcerated individuals.

26. We support the 2019 Justice Reinvestment legislation, which focuses funding on often-underserved communities such as people of color, rural residents, and Native Americans.