

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 755 and the My name is Anthony Johnson. I was honored to serve as one of the chief petitioners of Measure 110 and am urging you to fulfill the will of the voters and the needs of our state to fund drug treatment, harm reduction, and recovery programs.

Oregon, like many states, was already suffering from an addiction crisis before the COVID pandemic. The pandemic has only exacerbated the isolation that many with substance abuse issues are facing, combined with the stress of surviving through a health and economic catastrophe. According to the Oregon Health Authority, overdoses are up 70% and we know that Oregonians are dying from an overdose every single day.

During the M110 campaign, I spoke with voters, editorial boards, and organizations across the state and it is clear that Oregonians passed Measure 110 overwhelmingly because they wanted to end harmful drug arrests AND provide more access to live-saving treatment programs. Addiction problems cut across political, economic, and cultural demographics, impacting virtually every family. The status quo of arresting people for their addiction and then inadequately funding treatment has obviously not worked. As of February 1st, one key prong of Measure 110, personal drug possession decriminalization, was enacted, but now legislators and policymakers need to ensure that the funding for treatment and recovery programs is not delayed.

Measure 110 addressed a glaring need facing our state, and it was a big step in improving our state's overall policy of addiction. However, delaying funding to fully implement the law will be a big setback with extremely harmful consequences. Lives are literally on the line.

Please support SB 755 and help combat our addiction crisis.

Thank you,

Anthony Johnson