



Miracles Club
4200 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Portland, OR 97212

Sunday, February 6, 2022

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

My name is Julia Mines; I'm the Executive Director of the Miracles Club and am a person in long-term recovery. I'm submitting this written testimony in opposition to SB 1541.

The Miracles Club was founded in 1993 by three men in recovery who sought to create a safe and sober environment to sustain the African American Community. Our community recovery center offers addiction peer services to the African American Community, a fellowship hall, events and meeting space for community recovery meetings. We also offer a wide variety of program services with a focus on the African American recovery community. We provide transitional, temporary and permanent housing in alcohol and drug free living environments for individuals in recovery. We have cooperative relationships with Multnomah County, the Oregon Health Authority, Central City Concern, Guardian Management, Bridges to Change and HealthShare managing recovery apartment buildings and Transitional Housing.

It has taken nearly thirty years for us to establish a strong foothold within Portland's African American community — both in terms of building up our organization's infrastructure, and building deep trust within the communities we serve. Trust is essential when working to foster healing and begin the long work of addressing the multi-generational harms of the war on drugs. One of the most important ways we can continue to solidify trust within our community is by showing them that we will always be there to help. Sources of stable funding, like what Measure 110 was designed to provide, help make that possible. Measure 110 grant funding can help us maintain and grow our local presence, programs, housing and other service offerings.

Last year, the legislature invested \$31 million in Measure 110 funding for Access to

Care grants to expand access to vital addiction treatment, peer-supported recovery, harm reduction, and housing services. In only six months, 16,000 Oregonians have been helped by these lifesaving services.

Our organization was awarded the full \$213,077 that we requested, enabling us to add three additional peer mentors to our current full-time staff to offer more peer services for people experiencing Substance Use Disorder.

The impact of such peer services cannot be overstated; 23 years ago, it was forming connections with other people in recovery that gave me the hope I needed to begin my own recovery journey. Addiction is sometimes referred to as a “disease of despair”; restoring hope to someone in the midst of their struggle can be the difference between whether they come back for the recovery meeting or return to the old behaviors that threaten their recovery. Creating connection and restoring hope — or not — can be the difference between life or death.

The continued lack of harm reduction and addiction recovery services to Black and brown populations is unconscionable. It is our communities that were directly targeted and most damaged by the racist war on drugs. Measure 110 funds are the first time that organizations like mine have been given a source of stable, sustained funding. The voters made their desires clear, and yet some are already trying to strip this funding away from us. We need these dollars to engage in the hard but extremely necessary work of addressing the multi-generational harms of the drug war. In addition to the trauma my community experiences as individuals, we are also born with a collective trauma because of the many harms inflicted upon our communities for centuries. We continue to be overrepresented in the criminal judicial system, while being underrepresented in the healthcare system. Measure 110 is an important tool for how we can turn that tide and begin to address addiction as a health issue — not a crime or a personal weakness.

A \$270 million investment to increase access to lifesaving services across Oregon is underway now. Soon, thanks to Measure 110, housing, peer support, harm reduction, overdose prevention, and low-barrier recovery treatment services will exist in every Oregon County. \$270 million may seem like a lot of money, but overdose deaths are on the rise across the country, and new data from SAMHSA shows that Oregon ranks second in the nation for substance use disorder and 50th in addiction and recovery services. These numbers are from 2020, one year before Measure 110 went into effect. Without Measure 110 we can see that the crisis is only worsening. **The need to continue to fully fund Measure 110 services could not be more urgent.**

The Measure 110 Oversight & Accountability Council received applications from service providers like me across the state for over \$390 million, about \$110 million *more* than the Council had available to distribute. With Measure 110 we're making great progress, but the program has not even been in effect for a full year, and only 10 percent of the funds have been distributed.

Oregon voters approved Measure 110 by a 17-point margin. Please uphold the will of the voters and reject any attempt to cut Measure 110 funding. There is no shortage of demands on behavioral health and community-based providers to respond to this growing behavioral health crisis. The pandemic has exacerbated the lack of stable investment in our existing system of response. Please do not create more uncertainty by passing bills like this one. Showing more lack of commitment to behavioral health is out of step with the demands from the Oregon voters, the urgent need to address Oregon's addiction crisis, and a breach of the trust we work tirelessly to establish with our clients and the community at large.

Sincerely,

Julia Mines
Executive Director
Miracles Club