

Date: March 22, 2023

To: House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

From: Travis Maurer, Acting Chair of the City of Portland's CPOT; founder of M91; and lead fundraiser for M91

Re: Support for Providing Permanent Revenue Stream to Fund the Economic Equity Investment Program (EEIP), HB 3431

Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of myself and my family, I submit to you support of HB3431. The intent of HB 3431 is in line with the will of Oregon voters who passed M91 to legalize marijuana in Oregon, in 2014.

Originally, 40% of the cannabis tax revenue was going to help fund education. The reason education was chosen is that during the drafting of M91 it was deemed "unconstitutional" to add a provision that privileged any group based on race (hypocritical in light of the racist drug war, I know), and that if M91 passed with such a provision it wouldn't pass muster at the legislature.

To me, it is morally reprehensible to allocate cannabis tax revenue away from those responsible productive members in communities most affected by the drug war and in favor of drug treatment and recovery; especially considering that data show's cannabis is rarely the substance which lands people to addiction and treatment programs; and because that is what those communities were promised with the 2014 M91 multi-million dollar communications campaign.

Those programs should be funded by other, more logical, revenue streams.

Providing opportunity for existing functional community members and their families should be the priority and the first line of defense in combating drug addiction. I have no doubt that if students were graduating from our educational institutions as programmers (the average age of a programmer is 18-34), engineers and computer scientists, despite their chosen career path (arts or sciences); and given the opportunity to become business and property owners, that we would see a significant decrease in addiction, and a significant impact closing all the gaps caused by the racist drug war.

The elephant in the room here is:

Should we prioritize addiction treatment for adults, or opportunities for children and families struggling to succeed because of their current economic situation?

As a founder of M91, a father of three in the Parkrose community, the will of the voters is obvious.

Respectfully,
Travis Maurer