

I work with two organizations in the Portland area that promote smart criminal justice reform. In 2020 Measure 110 was an example of this, and now HB 2513 is important follow-up legislation.

Previously Oregon was lacking treatment opportunities and other services for people with substance use issues, especially in rural areas and marginalized communities. Now, as a result of the passage and funding of Measure 110, over 60,000 individuals with addiction problems have already received services. It is very important, and a benefit both to individuals and to our state, for help to be widely available all over Oregon. This of course requires funding. Everyone who wants to end or manage their substance dependency issues should be able to access treatment and services. The decriminalization of personal use amounts of substances is also very important in addressing addiction successfully, as a health issue rather than a criminal issue, and directing individuals toward assistance and treatment.

It takes some time to measure the success of such a broad treatment & recovery program, but it is important to officially assess its implementation along the way. If HB 2513 passes, the Oregon Health Authority will take on the assessment task, looking at funding needs, and at cultural appropriateness of services, and documenting recovery successes; they can make legislative recommendations if needed, and will publish a report. This is an important bill for the Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee to consider and support.