



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Keith Wilson, Mayor
Robert Day, Chief of Police

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February 5, 2025

Joint Committee on Addiction & Community Safety Response

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97030

Re: Support for SB 236 – Increasing Penalties on Fentanyl-Related Offenses

Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf, Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 236, which seeks to increase penalties on fentanyl-related offenses. As a law enforcement professional and community advocate, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that fentanyl has had on our communities. The extreme potency of fentanyl and its significant role in overdose deaths necessitate urgent and decisive action to curb its distribution and protect public safety.

The growing opioid crisis, particularly the surge in fentanyl-related overdoses, underscores the need for stronger legal measures. Increasing penalties for fentanyl-related offenses will serve several crucial purposes:

1. **Deterrence** – Stricter penalties should help act as a deterrent against the manufacturing, distribution, and trafficking of fentanyl. The severe consequences associated with these activities may help discourage individuals from engaging in this highly dangerous trade.
2. **Public Safety** – Fentanyl is up to 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Even minuscule amounts can cause fatal overdoses. By enforcing stricter penalties, we can reduce the presence of fentanyl in our communities and ultimately save lives.
3. **Targeting Major Distributors** – Enhanced penalties focus on traffickers and high-level distributors rather than low-level users. Disrupting fentanyl supply chains is essential to curbing its widespread availability and reducing harm.
4. **Addressing the Overdose Epidemic** – The alarming rise in fentanyl-related deaths requires immediate intervention. Tougher penalties will help limit the influx of this lethal drug and contribute to a decline in overdose rates.
5. **Sending a Strong Message** – Passing SB 236 will demonstrate that the state is committed to addressing the fentanyl crisis with the urgency it demands. This legislation

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will reinforce public awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and reaffirm our commitment to community safety.

While enforcement and penalties are critical components of the response to the opioid crisis, they must be paired with comprehensive public health initiatives, including substance use disorder treatment and recovery programs. Expanding funding for treatment options, supporting underserved communities, and reducing the stigma associated with addiction are equally essential in combating this epidemic.

We urge your support for SB 236. This bill will help Oregon prioritize public safety, strengthen deterrence, and ultimately saves lives. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and work to addressing this urgent crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Day". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

ROBERT DAY
CHIEF OF POLICE