

Submitter: Sheena Powell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

Dear Co-Chair Prosanski and Kropf, and members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

My name is Sheena Powell and I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

According to many reports, Oregon lacks resources to address our alcohol and drug crisis, especially for youth—untreated alcohol and drug use results in harm to individuals, families, communities, and businesses. Additionally:

Most people who develop a substance use disorder begin using alcohol or drugs before the age of 18.

In Oregon, youth are more likely than the national average to start drinking or using substances early in their lives.

Oregon ranks among the worst states for youth access to addiction and mental health services.

Schools, families, and communities are struggling to manage rising mental health needs, while waitlists for youth treatment programs are long or nonexistent in rural areas.

Research shows that for every \$1 invested in prevention, up to \$10 is saved in healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity.

Youth who get help early are less likely to experience homelessness, incarceration, or overdose later in life.

I was only 15 when I was introduced to methamphetamine. I had no clue the dark place it would take me. I stayed in active addiction another 20 years leading to jail, institutions, near death, homelessness and hopelessness.

7/20/20 I surrendered and went to treatment. I fought for my life, fought for my children and rebuilt a respectable life I am proud of today but it wasn't easy.

Resources were limited.

Today I am a mentor helping pregnant woman get clean and sober in hopes of delivering a healthy baby. As a community partner it's frustrating when a mother desperately wants the help but there's no funding every direction we turn.

As a mother, my worst fear is that my children fall victim to peer pressure and experiment with any substance. I only hope that if they shall, there will be help available.

Respectfully,

Sheena Powell.