

Submitter: ELIZABETH BENITES

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 Elizabeth Benites, 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.