

Submitter: Max Seger

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 Max, and personally I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

I lost my brother at the end of last year after a long battle with substance use disorder. I lost my grandmother last month after her own battle with SUD. I myself live in recovery thanks to the resources I was afforded and sheer luck at having them available to me in Washington State as a teenager. The rest of my family and many of my friends were not so lucky and lost years of their lives or the rest of their lives to substances, which were much more widely available to them than the resources they truly needed. As I work in the recovery field now, I see day in and day out the effects of the resources we have to offer. My team works diligently and tirelessly to provide what they can, bending over backwards to provide support with the limited resources they can access.

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.

Your vote on this matter could make the difference and save the lives of young people, teens, and children. My brother began using substances at the age of 11, was in and out of jail throughout his life, and ultimately overdosed and lost his life, leaving two daughters behind. If he could have accessed treatment sooner in his life, maybe he'd still be with us. I hope that we can help prevent this same story from happening to other families.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. I hope that you will support this HB 3197 and make a difference in the lives of so many Oregonians.