

Submitter: Candice Altman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response

Measure, Appointment or
Topic: HB3197

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

My name is Candice Altman and I work at 4D Recovery as a Community Center Manager. I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use.

At 4D Recovery, our mission is to provide—in partnership with systems, communities, and individuals—comprehensive services that help adolescents, young adults, and families recover from substance use disorders. Our vision is a future where systems, communities, and individuals work together to ensure that all people receive the support needed to find and sustain recovery from substances. HB 3197 is a crucial step toward making this vision a reality by ensuring that Oregon's youth have access to the necessary prevention and treatment services to support long-term recovery.

Oregon lacks adequate resources to address our alcohol and drug crisis, especially for youth—untreated substance 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.

The Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission is finalizing a Youth Strategic Plan that will have options for immediate and long-term strategic impacts to address the growing crisis.

As someone in recovery from substance use disorder and someone who personally struggled with adolescent substance abuse, I deeply understand the urgent need for funding dedicated to prevention. My journey was one of pain and hardship, not only for me but also for my family. We all struggled, primarily because there was a lack of access to services and programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults facing these challenges.

My own struggles ultimately led me into the juvenile justice system, and later into the adult justice system, where I served three separate prison sentences, spent time in county jails, and left behind a trail of devastation—not only to my community but also to my family, and especially to my children.

Looking back, I can only imagine how different my path could have been if there had been access to the right services early on. Not only could these programs have helped me after my problems began, but if effective preventative measures had been in place before the issues started, the impact on my life and the lives of those I love could have been profound. I could have spared my family and children from much of the heartache and trauma they endured.

I also can't help but wonder if, with the right support, my daughter may not have struggled with substance use herself. Access to services could have saved her from experiencing so much pain and hardship.

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to read my story and consider the importance of prevention in addressing substance use disorders.

As a Community Center Manager at 4D Recovery, I see firsthand the transformative impact of access to recovery support. By investing in prevention and treatment, we not only save lives but also build stronger, healthier communities where young people have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Candice Altman