

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

My name is Sophia Polson-Toteff, and I work at 4D Recovery as a certified recovery mentor. I urge you to support HB 3197 to increase revenue for the prevention and treatment of youth substance abuse.

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.

I started off using at an early age, which included alcohol. Though drinking wasn't my biggest hurdle, as a mentor, many of my clients have faced alcoholism starting in their youth. As a recovering addict and a CRM, I believe wholeheartedly that investing in treatment services for our youth would make a significant difference in the amount of young adults that struggle with addiction. HB 3197 is critical because it increases funding for prevention and treatment, giving youth the resources they need before the addiction takes hold. Early prevention saves lives, strengthens communities, and reduces long-term costs associated with substance use disorder. Investing in prevention and treatment now means fewer people struggling with addiction later, which is something I believe everyone would love to see. This bill is a necessary step toward building a healthier future for Oregon's youth.

- **Person in Recovery:** "I started off using at an early age, which included alcohol. I believe that if I would have been intervened on, it would have helped save me from the negative impacts...."
- **Parent:** "As a parent, I feel it is important to have funding to help prevent children from becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs. These substances are more available than treatment options."
- **Treatment Provider:** "As a provider, I recognize the dire need to invest in adolescent services. Our state is failing our youth, and this funding will bring immediate solutions."
- **Peer Mentor/Outreach Peer:** "As a Certified Peer Mentor, Many of my clients started alcohol at a young age. I see first hand the consequences of underage drinking and how it impacts adulthood. Delegating funds to adolescent prevention, treatment, and recovery service would make a significant impact on our youth and their families."
- **Prevention Supporters:** "The state of Oregon does little to prevent our children from using substances, and these funds are a critical step in providing protections for our youth."
- **Youth Voice:** Provide your perspective on why services are critical and how alcohol plays a role in youth addiction.

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As a recovery mentor 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,
Sophia Polson-Toteff