

Submitter: Grant Schott

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety
Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

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.

I am lucky that I didn't start drinking regularly until my third year of college largely; it seemed like everyone else did, and apparently, most had for some time. I bought alcohol for some friends at times, which I regret as one who is in recovery, coming up on six years of sobriety. Although I now see the negatives of alcohol even back then, I blessedly did not suffer the overwhelming, irreversible effects that some do.

I think of several examples. An upperclassman who was a valedictorian and had a college baseball scholarship, who drank as a kid, never quit, had numerous DUIs, and died of liver cancer in his 40s. Another great athlete who started drinking young, drank a fifth a day or more, is unemployed, awaiting a liver transplant, and is taken out in the ambulance every few months. My cousin's brother-in-law started drinking at Crane boarding school, had many MIPs in college, and died in a single-car DUI wreck after a July 4th party in 2011 at age 30.

The list goes on, sadly. So many young and middle-aged lives are diminished and destroyed because of alcohol and drugs, with alcohol affecting the most people. If we let this industry exist, they and those who buy the products must pay more to prevent our kids from leading alcoholic lives, and early deaths.

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