

Submitter: Erin Curry

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

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

My name is Erin Curry, and I am writing to urge your support for HB 3197, a crucial measure that seeks to increase funding for the prevention and treatment of youth substance use. This investment is critical to addressing Oregon's growing addiction crisis and ensuring that young people have access to the resources they need to lead healthy, productive lives.

Oregon continues to face a severe shortage of resources to combat alcohol and drug addiction, particularly for youth. Untreated substance use disorder has far-reaching consequences, not only for individuals but also for families, communities, and the broader economy. Consider the following:

The vast majority of individuals who develop substance use disorders begin using alcohol or drugs before the age of 18.

Oregon's youth are more likely than the national average to start using substances at an early age, increasing their risk of long-term addiction.

Our state ranks among the worst in the nation for youth access to addiction and mental health services.

Schools, families, and communities are struggling to manage the increasing demand for mental health and addiction support, while waitlists for youth treatment programs—especially in rural areas—are long or nonexistent.

Research shows that every \$1 invested in prevention can yield up to \$10 in savings by reducing healthcare costs, criminal justice involvement, and lost productivity.

Early intervention significantly decreases the likelihood that a young person will experience homelessness, incarceration, or overdose later in life.

As someone who is in recovery and actively working in the recovery field, I have seen

firsthand how vital access to treatment and prevention programs can be in transforming lives. Too many young people are struggling in silence, unable to access the help they need. HB 3197 represents an opportunity to change this reality by investing in a future where every young person has the support and resources to overcome substance use challenges before they escalate into lifelong struggles.

I strongly urge you to support HB 3197 and help provide Oregon's youth with the tools they need to build healthier futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Curry