

Submitter: Jenny Rudolph

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety  
Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3197

Dear Co-Chairs Kropf and Prozanski and committee members,

I write in support of HB 3197-2 which will add a new point-of-sale tax on beer, wine, and cider products in Oregon. As a mom of two young boys, and a person that has a family history of alcoholism, I strongly support this effort to increase prevention and treatment efforts. Right now, more than ever, we must seek stable funding for our public health and mental / behavioral health support system.

First and foremost, this proposal strikes a balance—it imposes only a small cost on consumers while generating significant revenue to address Oregon’s addiction crisis. It is a small tax on the consumer -- at the register – starting at 2 percent and gradually increasing to 8 percent. This is miniscule, but it will raise a meaningful amount of money to pay for critical programs to reverse our addiction crisis in Oregon. The data provided by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimates that the 2 percent tax would raise \$77 million per biennium, 4 percent will raise \$144 million, and 8 percent will raise \$222 million. Furthermore, the -2 amendment exempts small breweries from the tax, protecting Oregon’s beloved establishments.

I am a passionate advocate for primary prevention – which seeks to delay or prevent youth from using substances like alcohol, cannabis, opioids, fentanyl, tobacco and other drugs – all of which can cause serious harm to a developing brain. We would ask that a portion of these funds be used to fund primary prevention programs through local public health per HB 2954. If you invested in this way, we would implement evidence-based programs in partnership with schools that gives kids the tools and skills they need to build their self-esteem, establish healthy coping mechanisms and good decision making, reduce substance use, absenteeism, bullying, violence, depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation. Primary Prevention provides a serious return on investment, especially when the investment is 2 percent of the alcohol cost. On a \$10 purchase, that’s a mere 20 cents to save a life.

The funds would also be used to fund youth treatment and recovery, of which our state is in very short supply. This is not our area of expertise, but we know it is sorely needed.

We know that raising taxes is politically difficult, but we have confidence in you – and your constituents will back you up. According to the latest Oregon Health Authority adult health survey, 85% of Oregonians think alcohol is a serious threat to society

and nearly half (45%) say drinking has caused trouble in their families.

We need you to step up and do this very difficult thing to improve health outcomes for our kids. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jenny Rudolph  
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