



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

December 4, 2023

To: [Joint Interim Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response](#)

[Senator Kate Lieber Co-Chair of JACSR](#)

[Representative Jason Kropf, Co-Chair of JACSR](#)

Re: **Measure 110 - Addiction and Community Safety Response – COMMENTS**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon urges this committee to consider ways to assess and strengthen the impact of Measure 110. It would be premature to repeal Measure 110. Instead, more time is needed to fully implement the measure, to assess data about its effects and to consider the impact of other factors which interact with the outcomes- factors such as affordable housing as well as the availability of mental health professionals and facilities.

1. The League agrees with the assumptions underlying Measure 110.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that substance abuse/addictions are public health issues, not crimes. The League supports considering community-based treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

We agree with the [Oregon Health Authority \(OHA\)](#) which considers Measure 110 to be a Health-Based approach to addiction and overdose. The measure created Behavioral Health Resource Networks which reported more than 100% increases in treatments for substance use disorder between September, 2022 and March, 2023.¹

The League of Women Voters believes in the elimination of systemic bias, including the disproportionate policing and incarceration of marginalized communities.

A study conducted by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission found that [African-Americans in the state were convicted of felony drug possession at more than double the rate of whites](#) in 2015.²

2. More time is needed to implement and assess the measure.

The League of Women Voters believes in reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law enforcement programs and policies.

Although drug decriminalization was enacted at the beginning of 2021, most of the funding for treatment and harm reduction services was not awarded until August 2022. More time is needed to compile accurate data about the effects of the measure. While there are correlated problems, these may not actually be caused by Measure 110.

Currently there appears to be a perception of increased drug use and crime caused by Measure 110, but this is not supported by research. It is possible that the public is more aware of the problems because

homelessness has grown by 63% over the past 6 years. The [lack of private housing](#) is related to increased public drug use.³

The FBI [reported](#), via OPB, that violent crime and property crime actually decreased in Oregon in the year after Measure 110 was implemented.⁴

3. At the same time, consideration needs to be given to the ways that other factors interact with and affect drug use.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most-effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty.

The League of Women Voters believes that when families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, the government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system in Oregon which includes state budget allocations that reflect service priorities jointly determined by Community Mental Health Programs and the state Addictions and Mental Health Division.

LWVOR believes that the mental health delivery system should include services that focus on recovery of the individual through use of evidence-based crisis intervention and ongoing support. These services could include supportive housing.

While drug use can lead to homelessness, it is also the case that [homelessness is a stressor that leads to drug use](#).⁵

The relationship is complex, necessitating an [individualized approach](#) to treatment for mental health issues.⁶

This is problematic in a state where years of disinvestment in mental health have created a serious shortage of personnel and facilities, while millions of dollars were appropriated for community mental health facilities to pay workers more or hire new staff. However, building up the workforce has proven to be slow. For instance, in September, 2023, [Cascadia Health](#) had 168 positions open with continuing high turnover.⁷

We urge you to consider this input.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Rebecca Gladstone
President LWVOR



Jean Pierce
Social Policy Coordinator

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2. 2015 study by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission as reported in an Associated Press article: **Oregon Study Finds Racial Disparities in Drug Convictions.** The Seattle Times, December 16, 2016
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