

Implementation of Oregon's Measure 110's Failed Policies



By Oregon State Senator, Dennis Linthicum

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It hasn't taken long for death, addiction and cultural destruction to hit our streets after the implementation of Measure 110's failed policies. The writing has been on the wall and everyone has realized that the policies aimed at decriminalizing drugs and defunding police, parole and probation are disastrous ideas.

Fixing the failures of Measure 110's decriminalization policy has been one of the focal points for this legislative short-session and was the main topic of debate on Friday, as the Senate dealt with HB 4002.

HB 4002 legislation is moving enforcement in the right direction. It is a partial answer to Oregon's drug addiction problems which have been exploding around the state. The streets of downtown Portland and our mid- and smaller-sized metro-areas have been hardest hit. It has also impacted our rural communities and local school districts across the state.

Many legislators noted that this fix provides a slow road to recovery with Oregon's Police and Sheriff's departments facing the toughest challenges as they will be on the front lines dealing with the new regulatory standards.

However, I voted, "No," because, 1) I knew the bill had the votes to pass, and 2) I wanted to challenge leadership regarding the bill's deficiencies and inadequacies, and 3) I

spoke to missed opportunities which still need to be addressed. The bill's 75 pages has good intentions and many positive changes, but it is not a panacea.

First, it places enormous faith in behavioral health fixes after the fact.

You might recall the commercial where there is an image of an egg being fried on an iron skillet. The punchline was, "this is your brain – on drugs!" That famous line, is more accurate today than ever before because the narcotics being used today are exponentially more powerful and addictive.

A major portion of the \$211 million dollars associated with HB 4002 is focused on providing treatment for opioid use disorders, co-occurring substance use disorders and behavioral and mental health conditions. However, money is needed in age-appropriate venues to move our culture away from its love-affair with drugs. I don't know why people turn to drugs in the first place, but once they are addicted, behavioral health isn't going to put Humpty together again.

We must stop this from happening in the first place.

It's imperative to cultivate robust and enduring family structures to ensure the well-being of every family member. Social-science research underscores that strong marriages significantly contribute to overall familial health and happiness. This is particularly crucial as it diminishes the likelihood of children turning to drugs or narcotics.

I would guess that a considerable portion of our population is missing this important piece of the puzzle. This results in a dependency on government initiatives and programs to make-up for the missing familial, emotional, and financial support. These unrealistic expectations eventually lure legislators toward a path that will lead to increased costs, bigger government bureaucracies, and more broken promises.

Second, I'm skeptical of the lavish promises coming from the party that welcomed the Soros funded scam about the societal value of marijuana (2014 – Measure 91) and the decriminalization of more highly addictive and powerful drugs, like methamphetamines and other opioids (2020 – Measure 110).

The left's cultural bullhorn is extremely powerful. It only took a 6-year span to go from legalizing a supposedly less dangerous substance, marijuana, to fully decriminalizing addictive and infinitely more harmful narcotics.

Our meth and opioid problems, particularly with fentanyl, a low-cost and synthetically manufactured opioid, is problematic because they are extremely potent central nervous system (CNS) stimulants. With the decriminalization effort, it was easy for dealers and cartels to push the idea that these are cheap alternatives amongst many recreational drug choices.

For decades, the Democrat party majorities have drawn inspiration from the luminaries of the 1960s counterculture movement, embracing its ethos of radical change, often through the lens of drug exploration. One of the most famous drug-promoting individuals of the mid-60s was Timothy Leary. Leary gained notoriety for his research into the effects of psychedelic substances such as LSD and psilocybin on consciousness and behavior. (2020 – Measure 109 – Oregon voters narrowly approved the adult use of psilocybin, a hallucinogenic fungi.)

Timothy Leary, is the one who coined the phrase “Turn on, tune in, drop out.” This quote was quite a catchy slogan in the day. It encapsulates Leary's belief in the rejection of mainstream societal norms. Leary advocated for individuals to “turn on” to new experiences, “tune in” to their inner selves and ultimately “drop out” of conventional expectations and structures that he deemed restrictive.

The reason this tragedy has been constantly rapping at the

doors of our communities, schools and homes is because of this cultural drive. Our societal momentum is not accidental but has been engineered. The push is, "Turn on" – get high, stay high; "Tune in" – satisfy your inner-self and discover your own truth; 'Drop out" – abandon the conventional norms of your parents and live to satisfy yourself.

Most of us can see this cultural moment being propelled by Hollywood, the music industry, promotional advertising, and mainstream social media, like Facebook, Google, Tik-Tok, and Instagram. These platforms exert far more pressure on culture with their simple memes and sloganeering.

This is particularly relevant since Oregon now occupies last place across the nation for academic proficiency. A fact that is not lost to the Democrat majority because they purposefully suspended Oregon's existing essential skills requirement through the 2027-28 school year.

The majority party is planning on gaming the system by harnessing votes through technological advancements, social movements, deteriorating health and economic conditions. Their goal is to ultimately shift values and attitudes by harnessing the political power of their single-party rule.

I stand with our public safety officers, their families and the behavioral health practitioners who daily deal with people that have been so tragically impacted. I will continue to strive for policy changes that will save and improve lives by breaking the cycles of multi-generational government dependency.

Lastly, my vote in opposition to this needed bill was a really a strategic "No," compared to the fierce opposition that came from the radical left.

Unfortunately for us, many in the ruling party still cling to a fantasy world where everyone can have their own truth, do as they please and can stay "tuned out" forever – all on the

taxpayer's dime.

If we don't stand for rural Oregon values, no one will...

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