

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: my name is Joe Kubetz, I am a resident of Portland and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1675.

Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: “Morally speaking, there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings. Indifference to evil is worse than evil itself. In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

Instead of criminalization, we need to embrace compassion.

Twenty years ago, when I was going through my own experiences with addiction, luckily I didn't get into any serious accidents or hurt anyone because I had enough supportive and kind people around me. I'm lucky that I had the opportunity to get treatment, and explore healing practices such as yoga, meditation, and learning more about nutrition.

Instead of putting people in jail, this bill would focus the shift back to connecting people with services and support that they need. We've seen how incarcerating people doesn't work. Why don't we try something different? Harsh drug laws have negative impacts on families and communities. Separating family members through incarceration causes more harm than good.

Passing this bill would mean that fewer people will be incarcerated for very minor offenses, and they would be able to receive treatment and supportive resources and services.

Thank you,  
Joe Kubetz  
Portland