



Oregon Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

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February 5, 2007

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**Written Testimony of Rob Bovett
before the Senate Health & Human Services Committee
in Support of Senate Bill 184 (and other related legislation)**

Dear Chair Morrisette, and Senators Kruse, George, Monnes Anderson, and Verger,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony in support of Senate Bill 184. On behalf of the Governor's Meth Task Force and the Oregon Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, I strongly urge you to support this important legislation. ***SB 184 is a critical piece of our evidence-based response to the meth epidemic.***

However, ***we must go further.*** Some of our 2005 strategies to address the meth epidemic were successful: Meth labs in Oregon have all but disappeared, and the purity of meth is plummeting throughout the Nation. We now have a golden opportunity to address the underlying issue of addiction. Here are three specific suggestions I would like to offer for your consideration:

1. Addiction Treatment and Recovery Support

Oregon is 4th in the Nation for treatment demand *per capita* for young adults (18-25). Unfortunately, we rank 49th in the Nation for treatment access for that same critical group. Repeatedly recycling meth addicts back into society without providing evidence-based treatment and recovery support needlessly destroys families and harms public safety. This must end.

Senate Bill 184, which allocates 2% of OLCC revenues for these efforts, is a good first step toward restoring and enhancing evidence-based treatment and prevention in Oregon.

Another critical piece involves what is, quite frankly, an embarrassment to the State of Oregon, namely our artificially suppressed beer tax that hasn't been increased in 30 years. To remedy this situation, ***the legislature should pass House Bill 2535***, the Dingfelder-Morrisette beer tax bill, which would provide further funding for essential evidence-based prevention, enforcement, and treatment. Importantly, the bill also effectively exempts all of Oregon's breweries from the increased tax.

Furthermore, the legislature should pass Senate Bill 502 (or amend House Bill 2535 to include the contents of Senate Bill 502) to correct state laws that create an improper balance of power that favors distributors and harms manufacturers and retailers. Those unfair laws likely violate the antitrust laws of the United States - similar laws in the State of Washington were recently struck down by a federal court. The improper balance of power has led to the artificial suppression of good public policy in this area for the last 30 years. That must end.

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Rescue. Defend. Shelter. Support.

2. Statewide K-12 Prevention Curriculum

Oregon law and administrative rules require the implementation of evidence-based addiction prevention curriculum and programs in all Oregon grade schools. ORS 336.222 to 336.245; OAR 581-022-0413. Unfortunately, we have not been funding that mandate. This is a tragedy of immense proportions. We should promptly end our failure to fund this critical program. We owe nothing less to the next generation.

To provide that funding, I propose the following **amendment to Senate Bill 184: Amend lines 20-24 of the bill to provide 2% of the General Fund allocation from OLCC proceeds (i.e., reduce the General Fund allocation from 56% to 54%), and dedicate that 2% (approximately 17 million) to fund statewide evidence-based K-12 prevention curriculum and programs.**

3. Oregon State Police - Restoring Basic Services

Over the past two decades, the basic services provided by the Oregon State Police have been gutted. Those core services not only include highway patrol, but also criminal investigation and forensic crime lab operations. Local law enforcement agencies are simply unable to backfill the resulting enormous hole in public safety. This must be repaired.

The Governor's budget proposes to add 139 patrol officers, 12 detectives, and 15 forensic scientists. To fund this restoration of basic public safety services, the Governor has proposed dedicated funding from a new surcharge on certain levels of auto insurance coverage. This proposed funding source was not met with enthusiasm. Others have proposed using a beer tax increase. However, those funds are both inadequate and are needed to restore basic treatment and prevention services, as described above. If the legislature wishes to choose another mechanism to fund this basic public safety infrastructure, so be it. But Oregon cannot afford to have this situation continue.

Thank you for considering my thoughts. I urge your strong support of the legislation and amendments described above. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.



Sincerely,

Rob Bovett

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