

A Resolution of the Jackson County Democratic Party

Resolution No. 2024-3

Supporting Deflection in Jackson County

1. Whereas, the [Surgeon General’s “Report on Alcohol Drugs and Health,”](#) released in 2016, notes that a substance use disorder is a clinical condition that impairs health and function and is not a flaw in a person’s character or morality (1); and
2. Whereas, addiction is a public health crisis where families across this country are fighting an illness as well as a [stigma](#) (1) (2); and
3. Whereas, while the [Mental Health Parity, the Addiction Equity Act of 2008 and the Affordable Care Act of 2010 mandated treatment](#) for substance use disorder, a treatment gap remains (1); and
4. Whereas, in 2020 [Oregon led the nation](#) in use of illicit substances, with 9.04% of its residents using these substances in the preceding 12 months, compared with 6.64% for the nation as a whole (3);
5. Whereas, incarceration is associated with increased risk of [overdose death](#) (4); and
6. Whereas, the post pandemic [price of jails](#) in 35 jail jurisdictions spanning 18 states shows an average cost of \$47,057/year (5); and
7. Whereas, Oregon’s incarceration rate of [494 per 100,000](#) residents is among the highest rates anywhere (6); and
8. Whereas, recent analyses document that Oregon’s treatment system falls far short of providing the [services needed by its citizens](#) (7), due to [substantial gaps](#) in the number of recovery community centers, inpatient treatment facilities, and recovery residency programs, among other factors (8); and
9. Whereas, 58.46% of Oregon [voters approved Measure 110 in 2020](#) which supported decriminalizing small amounts of illegal substance use and making it a Class E violation with a maximum fee of \$100 (9); and
10. Whereas, in 2024 with the passage of [HB 4002](#) and [HB 5204](#), the Oregon Legislature recriminalized possession of small amounts of illegal substances, not only making it possible for illegal substance users to be arrested and charged with a misdemeanor and subjected to jail time but also offering the option for them to “deflect” from arrest into a treatment program (10) (11); and

11. Whereas, starting in September 2024, Jackson County is one of 23 counties in the state to opt in to the new “deflection” program as an alternative to arresting individuals using small amounts of illegal substances in Oregon, making us eligible for “fast-tracked” funding (12); and
12. Whereas, one million dollars of fast-tracked funds awarded to Jackson County for deflection will be provided through the Addictions Recovery Center to the “Substance Use Disorder Withdrawal Management Expansion Project,” including a sobering center, and \$666,667 awarded to the Masters in Social Work program at SOU will be used to train more behavioral health workers (13); and
13. Whereas, Police diversion, sometimes called deflection, has rapidly moved onto the policing scene for its promise of
 - a. reducing crime (a core function of the criminal justice system);
 - b. reducing drug use (an expected outcome of treatment);
 - c. ensuring the “correct” movement of individuals either into the criminal justice system or away from it;
 - d. restoring lives (a core function of the human service system);
 - e. (re)building community relations (a desire of many community members); and
 - f. saving money (a concern for both public systems and taxpayers) (14); and
14. Whereas, deflection is an entirely new program that will require a new and novel process by local police when confronting illegal substance users in our county; and
15. Whereas, following passage of Measure 110, we witnessed the lack of timely planning for and coordination of social services with law enforcement to handle substance abuse violations; and
16. Whereas, the deadline of Sept. 1, 2024, is rapidly approaching when HB 4002 will become effective, thereby recriminalizing unlawful possession of a controlled substance; and
17. Whereas, people of color and the poor are more at risk in the recriminalization of substance abuse.

Now, therefore, the Jackson County Democratic Party resolves as follows:

1. That substance use disorder is a medical condition often co-occurring with other mental health conditions, not a misbehavior that needs punishment.
2. That Jackson County should prepare to provide efficient, high quality health care to individuals needing recovery choices as an alternative to arrest for use of small

amounts of illegal substances.

3. That Jackson County shall immediately prepare for deflection, including but not limited to hosting law enforcement personnel, mental and physical healthcare providers, elected officials, other primary stakeholders and citizens, in a public county forum.
4. That police shall be adequately trained to implement the deflection program.
5. That police shall avoid traditional arrest proceedings in favor of diverting offenders to new treatment options.
6. That Jackson County adequately fund and adequately staff social service and/or crisis intervention staff, treatment providers and treatment facilities for police referrals.
7. That plainclothes police, social service workers and/or crisis intervention staff regularly assist police officers, either directly or indirectly via a mobile crisis response team, sobering center and/or stabilization center.
8. That parity and equity in mental and physical health treatment must be paramount in our county and state.

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ADOPTED by the Jackson County Democratic Party Central Committee on the 22nd day of July, 2024.

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