



## OREGON SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Senate Republicans Join Democrats in Passing a Class A Misdemeanor for Drug Possession**

**SALEM, Ore.** – Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously adopted a bipartisan amendment to a placeholder bill recriminalizing public use of illicit drugs on public transit to a Class A misdemeanor. It passed out of [committee](#) with a strong 5-0-0 vote and will go to the Senate floor for consideration.

“I was proud to cast my vote in favor of a Class A misdemeanor amendment because everyone deserves to feel safe whether they are riding the bus or taking their kids to school,” said **Senator Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer)**, Vice-Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “We need to implement this statewide. If transit can be a drug-free zone, so can the rest of Oregon.”

“Democrats who crafted this amendment obviously recognize the severity of the widespread drug use in our communities but are only choosing to put a Class A misdemeanor on government transportation and not in our neighborhoods,” said **Senator Dennis Linthicum (R-Klamath Falls)**.

Testimony on the [-1 amendment](#) to SB 1553 provided by the Oregon Transit Association clearly supports a Class A misdemeanor to increase safety and accessibility, [stating](#):

“In situations where law enforcement involvement proves necessary, this bill will provide them with the tools they need to help keep illicit drug use off of public transportation and send a clear message that transit is a drug-free zone.”

“I am pleased Democrats finally agree that a Class A misdemeanor is the tool law enforcement needs to get people the help they need and clean up our communities,” said **Senate Republican Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend)**. “As per the [February 13<sup>th</sup> letter](#) we sent to the Co-Chairs of the Joint Measure 110 Committee, HB 4002 must also include a Class A misdemeanor to make real progress in solving the drug addiction crisis.”

SB 1553 has received substantial bipartisan support. A complete list of sponsors can be found [here](#).

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