

# [***Blue State Re-Criminalizes Small Possession Of Hard Drugs Amid Overdose, Addiction Crisis: 'We Were Too Progressive'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPD-BNX1-JBFB-H00T-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/GettyImages-1971231888-scaled-e1712013813363.jpg)

Democratic Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek signed a bill Monday re-criminalizing the possession of small amounts of hard drugs as the blue state continues to suffer from a rising overdose and addiction crisis.

Kotek received the legislation on her desk early March after Senate lawmakers passed the bill by a 21 to 8 [*vote*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/02/blue-state-lawmakers-reimpose-drug-penalities-crisis-sweeps-cities/), ultimately reversing a voter-approved portion of an initiative that decriminalized [*hard drugs*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/29/patient-fentanyl-drip-replace-tap-water-oregon-lawsuit-asante-rogue/). The new law comes with changes to the criminal consequences for small amounts of possession of heroin or methamphetamine which will now be considered a misdemeanor with a punishment of up to six months in jail.

The legislation will also be establishing “task forces” focusing on behavioral health, a behavioral health “workforce program,” as well as reducing “barriers to consumer access to substance use disorder treatment,” a letter [*signed*](https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/2024_4_01_Signing_Letter_HB_4002.pdf) by Kotek stated.[***(RELATED: Oregon Declares State Of Emergency To Address Fentanyl Crisis After Decriminalizing Hard Drugs In 2020)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/01/31/oregon-state-emergency-drug-epidemic-fentanyl-crisis-portland-measure-110/)

“Courts, Oregon State Police, local law enforcement, defense attorneys, district attorneys, and local behavioral health providers are all critical to these conversations and necessary partners to achieve the vision for this legislation,” Kotek wrote. “We must balance local programmatic design with the need to achieve statewide consistency and standardization where appropriate.”

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/GettyImages-1971232335-scaled.jpg)

A person is using fentanyl on Park Avenue following the decriminalization of all drugs in downtown Portland. (Photo by PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP via Getty Images)

In 2020, Oregon voters passed Measure 110 which allowed the state to become the first to decriminalize [*hard drugs*](https://dailycaller.com/2023/12/28/honduran-nationals-running-fentanyl-trafficking-rings-several-us-cities/) including cocaine, heroin, oxycodone and methamphetamine. However, since the measure passed the blue state has seen an increase in both drug addictions and overdoses. Nearly two years later in 2022, overdoses in the blue state increased by 20%, with police reporting they received 11 overdose calls in a single day in March 2023.

“We were too progressive,” Recovery Works Northwest outreach worker, Jovannis Velez, in Oregon [*told*](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/oregon-re-criminalizes-drugs-rcna142298?cid=sm_npd_nn_tw_ma&taid=660b356d5981f400018d3c7b&utm_campaign=trueanthem&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter) NBC News. “Society wasn't ready for it.”

While advocates of Measure 110 previously endorsed the bill as an opportunity to help addicts instead of them facing jail time, an improved care network was never fulfilled, according to the outlet. Based on an audit report released in 2023, nearly hundreds of millions of dollars from marijuana tax revenues were supposed to be spent on drug treatment and harm reduction programs, however, the funding was slowed, resulting in an increase in drug addictions and overdoses, the Associated Press [*reported*](https://apnews.com/article/health-oregon-8629d6e62bff151afbbdb3a37c2206ae).

**Graphic**

A person holds a foil while smoking following the decriminalisation of all drugs, including fentanyl and meth, in downtown Portland, Oregon on January 25, 2024. (Photo by PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP via Getty Images)

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