

### Sample comment to your representative:

Hello, Rep \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I want your support for the Pathways to Recovery Act HB1499. Our current system that treats substance use disorder as a crime has been a colossal failure. Incarcerating individuals with substance use disorder is ineffective, costly, and creates barriers to treatment, housing, and employment. The current approach further traumatizes those with substance use disorder and makes meaningful recovery more difficult. Because of racial inequities in our policing and judicial systems it has had disproportionately detrimental effects on BIPOC communities.

HB1499 takes a three-pronged approach known to be effective that includes outreach, treatment, and support services such as housing and pathways to employment. Pathways to Recovery is an evidenced-based approach developed by public health experts, legal and law enforcement experts, treatment professionals, leaders of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, and formerly incarcerated and directly impacted community members. Create meaningful, evidence-based recovery and support HB1499.

Thank you.

Please check if your Rep is a co-sponsor and thank them for their support for this bill. You may want to change the above sample to reflect their willingness to co-sponsor this legislation.

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**Email each member of the Public Safety Committee** and let them know you support HB 1499. If they are already sponsoring or co-sponsoring the bill please thank your representative.

We encourage you to personalize your messages as these are most effective. A draft with suggested talking points is provided below for inspiration.

Hi, my name is <\_\_\_> and I am a <constituent/resident> from <Legislative District> <zip code>.

I am writing in support of HB 1499. The Pathways to Recovery Act is both common sense and transformational. It accomplishes the following:

- Creates better, evidence-based responses including referrals to community-based care for public order issues stemming from substance use, to increase the safety and health of all of our communities.
- Decriminalizes personal use amounts of drug possession by creating a new public health framework for access to care, treatment, and other supportive services, instead of arrest and jail.
- Creates and implements a statewide substance use recovery plan to be developed by experts in the fields of health and safety and individuals with personal experience in recovery from substance use disorders. They will help design a plan for delivering comprehensive pre-treatment outreach, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Provides training for law enforcement regarding substance use disorders and how to connect people to services.
- Assesses workforce conditions for the behavioral health services sector with an aim toward improving service provisions and outcomes.
- Provides funding and resources for increased treatment and recovery support services, including new revenue, leveraging existing health insurance benefits and grants.
- **Your personal reason (always best option)**

Washington lawmakers can help community members access lifesaving and life-changing recovery services in rural and urban areas, while increasing community safety and health, by passing this legislation. The time for this smart, just, and effective policy is now.