

Submitter: Joseph Gramer  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure: SB559

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

I already submitted testimony in opposition to 559. But there are two further points I want to add. For disclosure, I am a chronic pain patient, and have relied upon opiate-based pain medicine for over ten years for effective pain management, relative functionality and quality of life. (By the way, despite contemporary claims to the contrary, this medicine does immensely help many people on a long term basis. It has done so for centuries, if not millennia. Trying to blot out that amount of history is absurd.)

Anyhow, my first point is that the bill would slash public members of the PDMP commission from two to a bare one, and that person would have to be “expert in information technology.” Restricting that one little seat to computer wizards would effectively more than halve the prospective field of candidates. If this law was just, truly representing all stakeholders in the issue, you would, instead of imposing harder restrictions, open a seat to a chronic pain patient. What this bill would do instead is further silence patients and bar us even a place at the table.

Secondly, Secretary of State Fagan spearheaded this dismal bill at least in part because of an instance of opioid addiction in her family. I’m sure we’re all sorry for her familial tragedy. Addiction is a terrible thing, and addicts should get all the help they need to survive, stay clean, and build better lives. I’m sure all the chronic pain patients I know would agree. But this bill would do nothing to help addicts. In truth, it clearly targets legitimate chronic pain patients. Please note: patients are not addicts. We’ve been saying so for years to anyone who’ll listen. (Growing numbers of press and political bodies are at last, thank God, beginning to do so.) I know we’re much easier to target and punish than the dealers of heroin and illegal fentanyl who are driving the “epidemic.” But again I say, patients are not addicts. This isn’t even apples and oranges. More like apples and dolphins.

Please dump this devious and bigoted proposal.

Thank you,

Joseph Gramer, Salem