

Submitter: Dennis Harper

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

Re: SB 1573 (2026 Session) - Syringe Service Program Buffer Zone

As a longtime Portlander of nearly 50 years and a home owner on NW 18th Avenue for 42 years just two blocks from a regular distribution site set up by a syringe service program (PPOP), I witnessed daily disastrous results of its recklessness. The weekly handout attracted 50 to 75 people on the street who were drug users. Furthermore the syringe service program was also a magnet for the drug dealers who readily found customers for their illicit goods.

For days after each syringe distribution, the devastating impact of PPOP's work was all around us. Drug users lay in doorways of apartment buildings or on the steps of two cathedrals, and used syringes and fentanyl-tainted foil was strewn on sidewalks, while children walked by on the way to nearby schools.

We neighbors were the ones left to deal with and clean up after this ill-conceived social experiment. Our cries for City and County help seemed to fall on deaf ears.

So I offer my strong support for SB 1573 as an initial step by Oregon to establish clear ground rules for syringe service programs. I consider the bill to be only a first step, because the public actually wants robust drug rehabilitation programs that will mandate drug treatment for street drug users rather than drug-use-enabling syringe service programs that perpetuate the disaster that continues on our neighborhood streets.

Sincerely,
Dennis M. Harper