

Submitter: Ann Chakwin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or SB1573
Topic:

Dear Representatives-

I am writing to you in the strongest opposition to SB1573. Harm reduction, specifically syringe service programs are an evidence-based substance use disorder intervention that engages people humanely and with dignity. SSPs provide a no-wrong-door approach to life saving-services often not garnered elsewhere in our communities. Not only do SSPs provide a service that keeps people safe from the public health threats of HIV and HCV, they serve their communities through clean-up projects, educational opportunities, and an avenue to partnerships that transform lives. As importantly, SSPs provide a continuum of options for people who use substances to gain access to health care, and often SUD treatment; completely in alignment with the Governor's strategy to support treatment for people with SUD. SSPs are often the first step toward recovery. 40 years of research show SSPs to be effective at reducing communicable disease transmission, and engaging people humanely where-they're-at for service exploration. I personally have been doing this work in the PNW for 38+ years and have observed the positive power of SSPs. This attack on mobile SSPs will render our rural and frontier communities void of these imperative services. These regions of our state, as you well know, do not have the resources for brick and mortar SSP work. Thus, they meet people where-they-are at with safety supplies, and also food, socks, and in the winter, much needed cold weather gear. If you pass this bill you are clearly making the statement that a segment of our Oregon society does not matter. That people who access much needed multi-modal services through SSPs are throw-aways. I would like to think better of our elected officials. Do your homework, read a well-rounded body of evidence, not just that which maintains your confirmation bias, but has little rigor.

Thank you.