

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

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karlee Eichenberger, and I am a parent of two elementary school children at Cathedral School in Northwest Portland. I am writing in support of SB 1573.

I believe strongly in compassionate, effective services for people struggling with addiction. Those services matter, and they should exist in places where they can be delivered safely, responsibly, and with accountability. At the same time, we must prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children.

For months, I watched open and frequent drug use occur within steps of my children's school. My children, who are in elementary school, regularly walked past used needles and other drug paraphernalia on their way to and from school and activities. There was also excessive trash and human waste in the same areas where children gather, walk, and play.

This was not an occasional incident. It became part of our daily routine and a constant source of stress for our family. Instead of focusing solely on learning, friendships, and the joy of childhood, our children were navigating environments that felt unsafe and unpredictable. No family should have to normalize that experience for their young children.

When the harm reduction location was eventually moved away from the area, the change was immediate and noticeable. Almost overnight, the school environment felt cleaner, safer, and calmer. The direct and significant correlation was impossible to ignore.

SB 1573 does not eliminate harm reduction services. It simply creates a reasonable and necessary buffer around schools and licensed childcare facilities. Children deserve clean, safe environments where they can learn and grow without exposure to open drug use or hazardous waste.

This bill also introduces accountability and responsibility for cleanup and safety—something that is currently missing. Services designed to reduce harm should not unintentionally shift that harm into spaces where children live their daily lives.

This is a balanced and common-sense step that protects children while still supporting services for those who need help.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 1573.

Thank you for your time and consideration.