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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

Harm reduction services play a vital role in connecting people with substance use disorders to services that are vital for treatment. As a GED teacher, I have witnessed many of my students struggle with addiction. I have also received countless referrals from Outside In's syringe exchange in Portland. This service not only protects the health of vulnerable people, but also offers a touchpoint for access to employment and education services. Passing this bill would severely limit access to services, and it would not carry any of the theoretical benefits. Regardless of the placement of a syringe exchange, people will continue to use drugs, and drug addicts will continue to roam the streets outside schools and daycares. If we want to address the addiction crisis, we must protect the health and wellbeing of drug users by connecting them to education and employment services, as well as healthcare, case management, and substance use counselors.