

Submitter: Jane Clark
On Behalf Of: Cathedral School
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

I am a parent of a child who attends Cathedral School in NW Portland. A syringe exchange has operated on Friday evenings 2 blocks from the school so I have had first hand experience of seeing the impact this has had. I urge you to support SB 1573.

As a parent, my primary concern is the safety and well-being of my child and other children in the community who attend schools and daycares. While I understand the intent of harm reduction services and support their existence, these services should not occur in close proximity to our schools. Our children should not have to encounter discarded needles or drug paraphernalia within 2,000 feet of where they learn and play. This puts our children at very significant risk - particularly younger children who pick things up from the ground not understanding the potential danger.

My 13 year old daughter has on multiple occasions witnessed people using drugs within a block or 2 of the school. We have seen drug paraphernalia on the ground near the school. She does not always feel safe in the area immediately surrounding her school.

This bill is a common-sense solution that:

- ? Establishes a necessary safety buffer around schools and daycares.
- ? Ensures accountability for programs that operate in close proximity to children.
- ? Restores the expectation that school zones should be protected spaces.

We are not asking that the services be eliminated because they are necessary and important. However there should be balance between the need to provide those services and ensuring the safety of children attending our schools. This is simply an issue of where the service is located. The reality is that discarded syringes and increased drug use occur in the vicinity of where these programs operate. If they operate in close proximity to schools and daycares children are put at risk. There needs to be a balance here - allow these important services to be provided - just not within 2000 feet of our schools and daycares. It is a question of balance, not prohibition.

Please vote YES on SB 1573 to ensure that our school environments remain safe and focused on our children's future.

Sincerely,

Jane Clark (Parent - Cathedral School in NW Portland)