

I am here in strong support of Senate Bill 1573.

Let's start with the obvious, since apparently it now needs to be said out loud: needles, foil, and crack pipes should not be handed out next to schools. If someone believes that opposing a bill that simply keeps drug paraphernalia away from children is the morally superior position, then they should take a moment to seriously reflect on how they arrived at that conclusion.

We have already tried it the opposition's way. For years. Unlimited discretion. No siting standards. No enforcement. No consequences. And the result is exactly what parents and residents have been describing: there are no laws on the books to regulate or control where these mobile syringe programs operate. None. When communities beg for help, they are told the same thing every time: there is nothing we can do.

That is why this bill exists.

Opponents want you to believe SB 1573 is an attack on harm reduction. That is false. Harm reduction will still exist. Syringe services will still exist. What will no longer exist is the ability to park a mobile unit next to a school and call it compassion.

*A 2,000-foot buffer is not extreme. It is not punitive. It is a few blocks. These are mobile units ; mobility is the entire point. Claiming that moving a van three blocks away somehow destroys public health is not a serious argument. It is an argument made by people who do not want regulation at all.*

Many of us remember when this was called a needle exchange. Exchange implied responsibility. What we have now is not exchange; it is a free-for-all. Take as many needles as you want. Take foil. Take pipes. Leave the waste wherever you want. No accountability, no expectation of responsibility, no concern for the surrounding community.

At that point, harm reduction stops reducing harm and starts redistributing it ; onto families, schools, neighborhoods, and especially children, who had no say in any of this.

And if the goal is simply disease prevention, then the public deserves an honest explanation for why crack pipes are also being handed out. Because let's be clear: these programs are not offering a pathway to recovery. They are offering maintenance of addiction in public view. Even people struggling with addiction themselves have said they feel enabled, not helped, by policies that ask nothing of them and offer no off-ramp.

We are also expected to ignore the financial incentives at play. A growing network of NGOs and nonprofits now depends on taxpayer funding from cities, counties, and the state to sustain these programs. It is not unreasonable to question whether some of the loudest opposition to SB 1573 comes from organizations that simply do not want any limits placed on how or where they operate. Because no one acting in good faith believes that moving a mobile unit a few blocks away from a school is unreasonable, unless the real concern is losing convenience, control, or funding.

When people who live and work in these neighborhoods are told their lived experience is less credible than data presented by organizations financially dependent on the status quo, it sends a clear message: the system is more interested in protecting itself than protecting kids.

We are told this bill is dangerous. What is actually dangerous is continuing a policy with no boundaries, no enforcement, and no accountability, and then acting shocked when needles end up on playgrounds and drug dealing follows distribution sites.

Let's be honest about priorities. Adults struggling with addiction deserve access to help. But adults also make choices; however complicated or tragic those choices may be. Children did not choose this.

Children are working toward their futures. They are legally and morally entitled to protection. We should not sacrifice children's safety and education because adults have decided to continue using dangerous drugs.

This is not radical. This is not partisan. This is common sense, which is why SB 1573 has bipartisan support.

What is extreme is insisting that any attempt to regulate needle and pipe distribution is somehow immoral.

SB 1573 does not end harm reduction. It ends the fiction that harm reduction means anything goes, anywhere, at any cost to everyone else.

Pass this bill. Protect children. Restore sanity.

Thank you.