

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

Submitter: Liz Harris, resident/business owner, Astoria OR Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health Measure

Regarding : In Opposition of SB1573

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Liz Harris. I am a resident of Clatsop county, Oregon and I strongly oppose SB1573.

Cutting access to harm reduction programs will have a devastating impact. There is a huge amount of evidence to support the fact that harm reduction saves lives. SB1573 will cripple this vital life saving intervention. Needle exchange programs help mitigate harm and provide other important services such as training folks in how to administer life saving naloxone. We are still experiencing an opioid epidemic. How will reducing access to clean needles in Oregon help reduce harm and addiction? It will increase unsafe usage and likely also increase the number of cases of Hep C in the state, as well as the number of deaths by overdose.

Hiding a problem does not make it go away. Addicts will not stop using or being visible on our streets if you end harm reduction programs, they will simply use more unsafely and at an increased risk for blood borne pathogens and death.

The 2000 feet restriction is arbitrary and will make it hard for programs, especially mobile programs to navigate, since home-based childcare programs can exist in any residential or commercial neighborhood. This bill would severely limit our local program's ability to operate in accessible parts of downtown Astoria given the location and numbers of schools, private, and church-based childcare centers.

The bill's enforcement provisions are especially alarming. Allowing private individuals to file civil lawsuits even if they are not directly affected, creates a serious risk for programs that are already underfunded and overstretched. The presumption that any discarded syringe found within 2,000 feet of a school or childcare facility came from a syringe service program is unfair and unsupported by evidence.

Passing SB 1573 will cause more illness and death due to the opioid crisis in our state. Please do not pass SB1573.

Thank You,

Liz Harris, resident/business owner, Astoria OR