

Submitter: Elizabeth Sheils

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

I am writing in support of the measure that would prohibit syringe service programs from operating mobile or temporary locations within 2,000 feet of a school or licensed child care facility.

I believe deeply in keeping children and families safe, and this measure is a reasonable and necessary step to do just that.

I understand and respect the intent behind syringe service programs. Providing safe exchanges and harm-reduction resources is important and can save lives. That said, the placement of these services matters. Schools and child care facilities should be protected spaces where children can learn, play, and grow without exposure to unsafe conditions or increased drug activity.

I have seen firsthand how the location of a needle exchange can impact an area. A syringe service program was placed near my husband's office, and it led to a noticeable increase in drug use and related activity nearby. While I empathize with the need for accessible services, placing them close to schools or child care facilities is simply not appropriate.

This measure does not eliminate syringe service programs, it sets thoughtful boundaries to ensure they are located in areas better suited to support both public health goals and community safety. Protecting children should never be controversial, and drawing clear lines around schools and child care centers is a common-sense approach.

I urge you to support this measure and help ensure that our community can care for vulnerable populations while still prioritizing the safety and well-being of our children and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.