

Submitter: Steve Kanter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee, I am Steve Kanter, Dean and Professor of Constitutional Law Emeritus at Lewis & Clark Law School, and a resident in NW Portland on Johnson Street between 22nd and 23rd Avenues. (For what it is worth, I was also president of the Oregon ACLU in 1980-1982, and have been involved in many civil liberties issues over the decades.) I offer my strong support for SB 1573. It provides a pragmatic Oregon solution to a difficult problem, allowing compassionate clean needle distribution to prevent disease transmission among addicted individuals, while protecting sensitive areas for our children from dirty and contaminated used needles near their schools, preschools and affiliated play areas. This bipartisan legislation is in the best of Oregon's traditions of rolling up our sleeves across the political aisle, working with concerned citizens and adopting a workable solution to a serious problem. The need for this legislation is evident. I live near Couch Park and MLC school, Wallace Park and Chapman School, a number of private schools and day care centers, and not far from Lincoln High School. It is typical to see drug paraphernalia and especially dirty, contaminated needles near and in these park and school grounds. This presents a significant health and social problem to our young children and is completely intolerable. This legislation is a critical step in solving the problem that plagues our communities in a compassionate and sensible way. Thank you for your time and caring for our children and the safety of our communities. Let's get this measure passed this session! Steve Kanter