

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

I am writing to express my support for legislation that would prohibit harm reduction distribution sites within 2,000 feet of schools.

My concern is rooted in direct experience. My son attended a K–8 school where a harm reduction distribution point operated a few days each week next to a McDonald's, immediately adjacent to the school's neighborhood. While I understand and respect the intent behind harm reduction programs, the location of this distribution site created serious safety issues for children and families.

During this period, the surrounding blocks routinely accumulated discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia. These items were often found on sidewalks, near curbs, and in areas where children walked to and from school. Parents and teachers had to volunteer each morning to comb the school's property and adjacent areas for discarded needles. This posed a very real risk of accidental exposure or injury for students and residents alike.

In addition, individuals seeking supplies frequently lingered in the neighborhood. At times this included public drug use, drug dealing, and unsanitary conditions. My son and some friends have been screamed at, chased, and threatened numerous times while walking to and from school in the neighborhood. While these behaviors may not reflect the goals of harm reduction efforts, their proximity to an elementary and middle school environment was deeply troubling and inappropriate.

Schools should be places where children can focus on learning and families can feel confident about their safety. Reasonable distance requirements do not eliminate harm reduction services; they simply ensure those services are located in areas that do not place unintended burdens on school communities.

I strongly support this legislation as a balanced approach—one that acknowledges public health needs while prioritizing the safety and well-being of children.