

Submitter: Kathleen Young  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573  
Letter OPPOSING OR Senate Bill 1573

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the committee:

I am an addiction medicine nurse at OHSU and a certified addictions RN who cares for people with substance use disorders and serious medical illness across Oregon.

I understand that this bill aims to reduce public drug use, reduce crime, reduce the effects of substance use disorder on our streets and in our communities, and make our state and shared spaces safer and comfortable for all Oregonians. I support and work towards these goals every day. However, this bill will have the opposite effect – it would make communities less safe.

Evidence is clear that harm reduction services do not enable or promote drug use. Instead, syringe service programs:

- Increase public order and reduce crime
- Reduce syringe litter
- Reduce needle stick injuries for first responders and the public
- Prevent disease outbreaks such as HIV and Hepatitis C
- Serve as a critical bridge to engaging people in addiction care
- Save lives

Efforts to prohibit syringe service programs from operating mobile or temporary locations within 2,000 feet of a school or licensed childcare facility will not protect children or families. Instead, SB 1573 will have the opposite effect.

Oregon has important work to do to address substance use disorder, expand access to harm reduction services and treatment services for all Oregonians. This bill would cripple vital services across Oregon communities – including both rural and urban – and it would be a huge mistake.

Thank you,  
Kathleen, RN