

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

Hello distinguished senate committee members,

My name is Andy Cho. I work and reside in Multnomah County. My opinions expressed here belong solely to me, and do not reflect the opinions or views of my employer or any other organization I am affiliated with. Thank you for your time reading this. Trust is one of the first things that a child learns being in a family. I am trusting each of you that you will read this letter with an open mind and heart.

Just as all of you, I care very deeply for the safety and well-being of children. In 2020, I acquired 50 signatures canvassing for Measure 26-214, colloquially known as "Preschool for All". Their mission was rooted in equity and evidence, with "research showing that every dollar spent on high-quality preschool returns between \$7 and \$12 to the community, reducing inequality and strengthening the social fabric".

I will be the first to admit that I am not happy or excited when I see discarded needles/syringes in our communities. This is coming from someone who is trained to handle sharps disposal, and has properly disposed of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of syringes in her lifetime. When I see discarded syringes on the ground, I feel frustrated - frustrated there are not more opportunities readily accessible for people to turn in discarded syringes.

Respectfully, this bill is acting in defense of children from an issue that does not. Is this from the fear of one of these discarded syringes transmitting HIV to a child? In the U.S. there has never been a recorded case of HIV transmission through a discarded syringe in a public space. Not once.

The standard length of an American football field is 120 yards, or approximately 360 feet. It is almost comical to think of the scenario of what this bill is proposing. Imagine the length of 5.55~ football fields consecutively lined up, which would add up to 0.3788 miles. This is the distance that a syringe service program is being asked to be kept away from any licensed schools and/or childcare facilities, the very same syringe service programs whose definition in this bill include "providing safe disposal for needles and syringes".

I don't like seeing used syringes discarded in our communities. Which is why I am still awake staying up until 6am PST after a long 10 hour workday, just to write you this letter. I am sincerely asking you to think of the children when making your decision.

What kind of message will we be sending to our youth if we, the adults in their lives, show them that decisions are made in fear and assumption, rather than equity and evidence. Thank you again to all the distinguished members of the Early Childhood and Behavioral Health committee.