

February 7, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pam Pearce, and I am sharing this testimony **in my personal capacity only**. The views expressed here are my own and do not represent the position of any organization I work with or any group I am part of.

I am a person in long-term recovery with over 30 years of lived experience. I have spent the last 10 years advocating for the importance of primary prevention and co-founded Oregon's first recovery high school. **As a person in recovery, I have the opportunity to hear from many individuals experiencing substance use concerns, and particularly from youth who need treatment and recovery, many of whom identify high-potency cannabis use as a contributing factor to the substance use disorders they are now in recovery from.**

I want to be clear: what I hear from youth, what I see in practice, and what the science now shows do not align with the narrative that cannabis is benign. Through my work, I regularly engage with current research, educational forums, webinars, and national experts focused on high-potency THC and adolescent brain development. The evidence is no longer emerging; it is here. High-potency cannabis products are causing real and profound harm to young people, particularly to mental health, motivation, and recovery outcomes.

I strongly support SB 1548 because it strengthens common-sense safeguards that prioritize youth and community health. As cannabis availability has expanded, it is critical that Oregon ensure policies keep pace with what we know about brain development, prevention science, and the real-world impacts on young people and families. SB 1548 is a responsible step that helps reduce unintended harms, supports informed decision-making, and reinforces that prevention and public health must remain central as Oregon continues to regulate cannabis.

We have reached a point where continuing to allow unrestricted access to increasingly potent products amounts to experimenting on youth, despite having sufficient data to know better. Public policy should protect young people, not expose them to preventable harm while we wait for consequences to accumulate.

Thank you for considering this perspective and for your commitment to the well-being of Oregon's children, youth, and families.

Pam Pearce

Concerned citizen who works and advocates for youth, families, and communities in Oregon.