

Good afternoon, Madame Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Tracy Swartley, and I am a resident of West Linn, Oregon. I am here today to ask that you vote in support of **SB 1547**.

Parents in Oregon need to be able to get their children help when faced with substance abuse, and it needs to happen fast!

When our high school-aged son began experiencing anxiety and depression during the pandemic, we did everything we could to try and help him...doctor appointments, counseling, therapy, etc. What we didn't know was that despite having been raised to know the dangers of substance use and the risks of having it in our family history, our son was experimenting with marijuana. He managed to graduate from High School with honors, achieve Eagle Scout rank and accepted a Dean's scholarship to a four year college out of state.

Despite our best efforts, he continued to buy into the "because it's legal it must not be that bad" mentality. His experimentation turned to recreational use and then became more frequent. Our intelligent, kind-hearted and dependable boy became moody and unmotivated. He then began experiencing psychological breaks caused by the extremely high levels of THC in today's marijuana. The son we knew was disappearing and becoming angry, aggressive and, at times, dangerous. He was obviously unable to stop using and clearly not able to make decisions in the best interest of his own health. Our family was in crisis and we, as parents, had to intervene quickly to save our son from this addictive substance and from moving on to other deadly drugs.

We scrambled to research programs, insurance, costs, etc. and it immediately became clear that getting our son the help he needed meant he would have to leave Oregon. We also learned that insurance companies don't consider marijuana to be an addictive substance so ours would not pay a dime toward getting our son the help he desperately needed. The price tags for recommended programs were in the tens of thousands of dollars per month. We were in a situation that can only be described as a nightmare and one that no parent should have to experience with their child. It would have been so helpful to have access to immediate, local detox and triage as well as available local treatment options to consider for our son.

We were fortunate to have resources to use for his care and were also very lucky to get him on a plane to a young men's program we had chosen out of state. However, many parents in Oregon are not able to make either of these things happen, which is a terrible injustice for both the addicted child and their families. The sad reality is that these struggling kids often end up homeless, in the criminal justice system or dead, which are all unacceptable.

Oregon must do better for our kids. I support Senate Bill 1547 and ask that you support it too. Parents in Oregon need to be able to get their children help when faced with substance abuse and this is an important first step in making that happen.