

Submitter: Brienne Howell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB1547

Oregons policy on youths over the age of 14 having the right to decline substance abuse treatment when a family member or healthcare provider deems it necessary is an absolute travesty and is literally killing children. I know a woman who lost her 15 year old son the day before his 16th birthday due to fentanyl overdose. She knew he was using and tried every Avenue she could to get him in treatment. But because he was of the age of consent, he refused and now this child is gone due to fentanyl overdose. The system failed him. It is failing all of our children when parents lose the right to care for their children. Fentanyl is a drug that is so powerful that most adults are powerless to getting help to get clean from . My own son died in July 2023 at the age of 27 due to a fentanyl overdose. He weighed less than 100 lbs and could not care for himself but I had no right to force him to get help here in Oregon. He was gone months after I tried to get him help and he refused.

I accepted that k couldn't force my son to get help as he was an adult (although adamantly disagree) but when meeting this new friend of mine through a grief support group for parents losing their children to substance abuse and finding out that a CHILD over 14 also had the same rights as my 27 year old son to refuse treatment, it infuriated me.

We need to change these laws to protect parents rights to care for their children. This child could be here today!! The system failed him and his mother and all other loved ones. I look at this fentanyl epidemic like I look at mental health issues where when someone is not able to care for themselves, we should be able to step in to care for them even without consent.. this could mean MANDATORY treatment sometimes to save their lives . This should be for all Oregonians despite age but shouldn't even be a question regarding children.

Please change this law and move towards giving parents rights back.