

Submitter: Martin Blech

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Addiction and Community Safety Response

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3946

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Prozanski and Representative Kropf, and Members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response,

My name is Martin Blech, and my child attends Arc-en-Ciel Montessori School, located directly across from Dawson Park in Portland. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3946, introduced by Representative Tawna Sanchez, which seeks to include preschools in the definition of “schools” concerning controlled substance offenses occurring within 1,000 feet of school premises.

The current exclusion of preschools from this definition has created a loophole that compromises the safety of our youngest children. Dawson Park and its surrounding blocks have become a hub for illicit drug activity and associated loitering, leading to numerous violent incidents. Since January 2022, police have responded to 13 shootings within one block of Dawson Park, three of which resulted in injuries and one was fatal. On July 19, 2024, during the preschool’s pickup time, a shooting occurred at Dawson Park, with over 80 rounds fired and two individuals injured. Parents present during the incident described the experience as terrifying. One parent recounted, “We tried to put our kid in the car as quickly as possible and speed away. The gunshots had not stopped.” Tragically, one of the victims succumbed to his injuries later that year. More recently, in March 2025, the owner of the Stop N Go Mini Mart, located adjacent to the park, was arrested for allegedly operating a significant drug trafficking operation. These events underscore the persistent dangers in the vicinity of my child’s preschool.

By passing HB 3946, we can close this critical gap, ensuring that all educational environments, including preschools, receive equal protection under the law. This amendment will empower law enforcement to take necessary actions to safeguard our children and support the broader community’s efforts to create safe and nurturing spaces for early childhood education.

I urge you to support HB 3946 and prioritize the safety and well-being of all children in our community.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Martin Blech

Portland, Oregon