

Margo Miller

From: Sheila Weaver <sheila.weaver@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2020 1:42 AM
To: Margo Miller; Senator Fred S. Martin; Senator Mary Souza; Senator Lee Heider; Senator Abby Lee; Senator Mark Harris; Senator Van Burtenshaw; Senator Regina Bayer; Senator Maryanne Jordan; Senator David Nelson
Subject: Oppose HB 340a

Dear Senate Health and Welfare Committee:

Please consider this as my written testimony.

I am a licensed Master of Social Work and native Idahoan in long-term recovery.

My addiction threatened my safety, my freedom, and my life. Getting sober 17 years ago was one of the most challenging experiences I've ever had. My recovery was made possible because I had access to evidence-based interventions provided by licensed professionals in a safe environment. Because of the work of highly trained individuals that specialized in substance use treatment, I was given the chance to build a new life, pursue higher education, and become a homeowner in District 17. I ask that you give children the same opportunity that I had to receive the best care they can so they can go on to lead full lives. Without access to competent treatment providers, Idaho children with substance abuse needs will be subjected to needless risk. Idaho children will be incarcerated and die preventable deaths from addiction, and this committee can make an impact in the lives of youth who can't speak up for themselves.

Today, I am honored to work with vulnerable children and families that are impacted by substance abuse daily. Addiction causes significant distress in a family; Parents seeking treatment options for their children agonize over how to best support them. Substance use disorder treatment is included in all health insurance plans. However, parents would not be able to use this benefit because private insurance will not pay for an unlicensed treatment facility. This means parents will be required to take on substantial debt to pay for treatment. This could result in businesses taking advantage of parents' financial situation during an already difficult time, something that has occurred in other states related to substance use treatment.

As a professional I have significant concerns about the potential for housing vulnerable children and adults together, particularly when the state is taking on a tremendous liability. Allowing non-licensed "temporary alcohol-drug abuse treatment facilities" for teenagers with essentially zero oversight sets the stage for children to be harmed and you have the power to prevent that. The co-mingling of adults and youth in a treatment setting was the impetus for the Jeff D. lawsuit over 30 years ago. The State should not risk another costly lawsuit as a result of this legislation.

While I sincerely appreciate the efforts of Good Samaritan Rehabilitation's work with adults, the facility and the authors of this bill have done almost nothing to provide clear standards and accountability for families and children when they need them the most. I ask that you oppose House Bill 340a and protect Idaho children.

Thank you,

Sheila Weaver, LMSW