

HB 845 Overdose Prevention Sites
In Support (FAV)

TO:

Chairperson Joseline Peña-Melnyk

Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM:

Rachelle Yeung

Mount Rainier, Prince George's County (District 47A)

My name is Rachelle Yeung and I'm submitting my testimony to you today because I know drug users. I love drug users. And because I am a drug user.

I support Overdose Prevention Sites because I don't want my friends to die.

And I don't want to die.

I volunteer with a group of harm reduction workers who test drugs at music events. We use reagents, which are chemicals that change color when in contact with certain drugs. We have also partnered with a university to borrow a mass spectrometer to measure down to the percentage the content of the drug. People line up outside our tent at music festivals to test with us, because people want to know what they're ingesting and to do so safely.

At one festival I worked at, we found fentanyl. The person who brought us the drug for testing did not intend to use fentanyl. She thought she had bought something else. Along with medical personnel, we were able to find the person who had sold it to her, who also did not know it contained fentanyl. He had intended to use it as well.

We were able to save multiple lives that night because we could safely test the drugs and provide immediate access to life-saving interventions, such as naloxone, in the event of an overdose. And that's why overdose prevention sites are essential. A safe, regulated and supervised space to use drugs should not be a privilege only available to people who can afford a music festival ticket. It should be something that everyone has access to.

Nobody deserves to die from drug use.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote yes on HB 845.