

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



April 29, 2023

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

Outlined below are the issues of concern members of the House Republican Caucus feel must be addressed to garner enough support to move from opposing Senate Bill 5536 to a “yes” vote. Our objective is to adopt a bipartisan, meaningful policy that will help people break the cycle of drug addiction and keep our communities safe. However, if the issues below are not addressed, we will regretfully continue to view legislative proposals that preempt local ordinances to be worse than no bill at all.

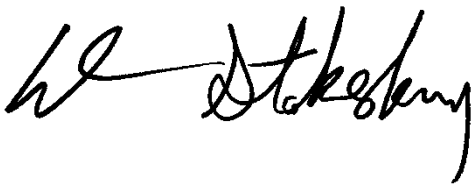
House Republicans identified the following concerns with the bill that came out of the conference committee:

- Although the bill would make drug possession a gross misdemeanor on paper, the jail diversion process proposed in the bill would lead to a revolving door of offenses in practice. We requested a 12-month diversion with a six-month review hearing and some prosecutorial involvement. This would ensure those individuals in compliance with the conditions of the treatment and the diversion would remain eligible after six months. Individuals still struggling with compliance and in need of additional support would receive the appropriate services. We believe this would deliver both compassion and accountability as equal parts of the equation.
- The bill would preempt local communities’ regulations in regard to using, selling, giving, delivering, and possessing drug paraphernalia, including establishing needle exchange locations. We believe local communities should have more control and flexibility in this area.
- The bill would create recovery residences in local communities that comingle individuals seeking treatment and sobriety with individuals who continue to use. We had grave concerns with this policy and asked for greater separation and prioritization of those striving to recover.
- The bill would establish health engagement hubs for children, as well as adults affiliated with syringe service programs and consumption sites. We asked that the state be notified and intervention occur when children are present.
- The bill would not require public notice for siting of opioid treatment facilities in local communities. We asked for mandatory public notice.

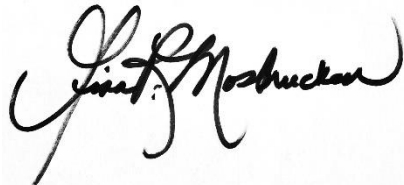
House Republicans believe these requested policies are reasonable, important and reflect the values of our communities. We remain committed to finding a meaningful solution that will strike a balance between compassion for those who are struggling with drug addiction and accountability to ensure they seek and remain committed to recovery and become positive contributors to their communities.

We stand ready to work with your office and all four caucuses in finding a solution that strikes the appropriate balance for our districts and state.

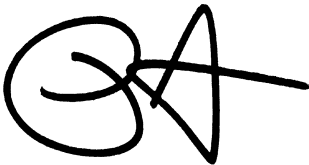
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Stokesbary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Drew" written in a more compact, stylized manner.

State Representative Drew Stokesbary
House Republican Leader
31st Legislative District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina Mosbrucker". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Gina" written in a larger, more prominent font.

State Representative Gina Mosbrucker
Ranking member, House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry Committee
14th Legislative District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Abbarno". The signature is very stylized and abstract, with a large, circular initial "P" and a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

State Representative Peter Abbarno
House Republican Assistant Floor Leader
Ranking member, House State Government & Tribal Relations Committee
20th Legislative District

CC: Speaker Laurie Jenkins
Majority Leader Andy Billig
Drew Shirk