

# Mayors and Business Leaders for Public Safety

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## Snohomish County Mayors' Response to *Herald* Editorial

**EVERETT — April 26, 2023** — The four members of the steering committee representing the Mayors and Business Leaders for Public Safety coalition — Mayors Franklin (Everett), Gailey (Lake Stevens), Nehring (Marysville) and Wiita (Sultan) — offered the following statement in a response to [Tuesday's Herald editorial](#):

“Readers of Tuesday’s editorial in the Herald may misunderstand this coalition’s position on Sunday’s unsuccessful legislative debate over Senate Bill 5536, the *Blake* fix bill.

“As the editorial correctly stated, this coalition has consistently made creating, funding and ensuring people get treatment for substance use disorders a priority for any legislation aimed at fixing our state’s drug possession laws, and have communicated that in letters and conversations with members of the Snohomish County legislative delegation and with our peers in other communities. The bill that emerged from the Senate reflected that priority, and cleared the chamber with strong bipartisan support thanks to the leadership of Sen. June Robinson.

“The editorial also accurately described our coalition’s disappointment that the House version unfortunately included several amendments we could not support, including the weakening of mechanisms to bring people into treatment.

“The potential for misunderstanding came in the description of our reasons for opposing a provision that would have allowed youth and adults to engage in ‘safe consumption’ sites. While we recognize that such sites may, in some instances, be an element of a community’s drug response, we flatly oppose any mandate that such sites be open to youth, due to the fact that there simply is no safe consumption of these substances for youth whose brains are still developing until age 25 and pose very real threats to vulnerable youth, including the risk of human trafficking. Additionally we are against taking away local jurisdictions’ ability to decide whether the distribution of smoking equipment and other public health supplies is appropriate for their communities. Harm reduction is important, but what may work in large urban centers may not be at all appropriate for smaller communities.

“We need strong legal action to stop the revolving door of drug use, illness, crime and disease now gripping our communities, and we are disappointed that an issue of this magnitude was left to be resolved in the very last days of the legislative session. As a result, local governments are now working quickly to enact solutions that will provide clear accountability, consequences and treatment options for knowing drug use and possession in an effort to get a grip on the drug crisis that is ravaging our communities.”

To learn more about the coalition, visit [keepourcityessafe.com](https://keepourcityessafe.com).