

SB23-171: Large Entertainment Facility Substance-free Seating Requirement

Good afternoon members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Amy Shaw and I am here representing myself in support of SB23-171.

For as long as I can remember, any time I have gone to a concert or a sporting event, it was a given that I would be drinking alcohol or using substances, since these places and activities are strongly associated with substance use. Alcohol is available everywhere you turn, and constantly promoted.

I am currently in recovery from alcohol and substance misuse, and before getting sober, I would use these venues and activities as an outlet to feed my addiction because it's incredibly socially acceptable there. These events are so often geared around drinking alcohol and substance use, that it's hard to feel like I fit in when I go as a sober person.

I have been to concerts, sporting events, plays, comedy shows, etc. since I got sober, and every time I go I wish there was a place for me to feel like it's acceptable to be sober. The more people I talk to about this, the more I learn that even people without substance use disorder feel the same pressure to drink at these events.

Providing a sober seating space at venues would be invaluable to someone like me, who wants to feel like I fit in and not feel isolated. I would feel incredibly supported by sharing a space with other like minded people that choose to stay sober at these events. Supporting SB23-171 would work towards normalizing the conversation of sobriety and that it's okay and completely acceptable to attend any event sober.

I urge this committee to vote yes on SB23-171.

Thank you.

Dear Committee,

First of all, I'd like to thank you for your consideration of the proposal for the Substance-free Seating bill (SB23-171) and your attention to my following testimony.

As an avid sports fan, concertgoer, and event enthusiast, I'd like to share my perspective as to why I believe having substance-free seating is an incredible opportunity to offer safer and more-enjoyable experiences, while also taking a major step toward addressing the continued negative impacts we see from drugs and alcohol around these major events. I would like it to be known that my perspective does not come from someone that has struggled with addiction in the past, nor do I consider myself "sober." My perspective on this bill comes from someone that intends to enjoy all events for the most they have to offer. The reason I would like to submit this testimony is so that the committee can hear from a perspective that relates as closely as possible to your "typical" event attendee, whether it be an NBA/NFL game, arena concert, or music festival.

Throughout my life, I have seen acts of violence, on numerous occasions, across many different event types. Fights at football games, beers thrown across multiple isles, verbal assaults by fans, and simply fights breaking out because someone bumped shoulders... For each and every time I have seen or been caught in the middle of one of these violent experiences, I can assure you there were a lot of people, a lot of energy, and A LOT of alcohol/substance involved. There is nothing I love more in life than attending concerts and sporting events with my friends and family, but I continuously find myself looking over my shoulder to see if this is the time that the rowdy, drunk, fan fight spills into my section and hurts somebody I'm with. You see it at every event, on every social media platform, again and again. Whenever you attend an event, you always have the thought in your mind of "I wonder what the person sitting next to me will be like." Will they be drunk? Aggressive? Vulgar? Hopefully not. But without the ability to somewhat screen what the type of people will be like in your section, then it will always be out of your control.

I believe this bill offers an opportunity for fans to knowingly avoid the potential of being involved around substance-initiated violence and influence at events. Someone would be able to purchase their tickets, bring their family/children, and know (going in) that they will not be interrupted or embarrassed by a substance involved fan in their section.

Apart from substance-initiated violence, these sections would offer families an opportunity to show their children that getting drunk at or before these events doesn't have to be the "norm." I believe there seems to be a stigma around sobriety at large events. There are many things that play into this simply because the "norm" for many events has been set to tailgating or pregameing before because it'll be "more fun drunk". Which, in turn, leads to continued drinking at the event. What this bill is helping to acknowledge is that others may feel less than the "norm" and unfit in the situation simply because they're not under-the-influence. These substance-free sections would give others the opportunity to enjoy these events as their own "norm" where people who may be in recovery, following religious practices, or simply want a better experience at the event can attend without the impact from alcohol on their surroundings.

Why I feel my perspective is important is because I am will not be a fan looking to exclusively sit in the sober-free section, but I can assure you I'd like to opportunity to consider and select it for any given event. Excluding season ticket holders... most fans purpose for attending a specific event likely varies from game-to-game or show-to-show. Maybe your friends are in town, it's a birthday gift for your parents, or maybe your child got straight A's and earned a night out to see their favorite team... Regardless of the reasoning, there are going to be thousands of people at these large events that would absolutely consider purchasing a ticket in a knowingly safer, substance-free, section because their primary intention is to enjoy the event with their loved ones.

I hope that this short testimony will help the committee see that this bill can and will be beneficial for all fans and event attendees. The approval of this bill will offer the opportunity to lead-by-example for the rest of the country and will be a great step froward for the thriving Colorado events.

Thank you for your consideration,

Connor Morse.



Support for SB-171, hearing on March 28 Jennifer Tibbetts to: committees.lcs.ga
03/23/2023 03:53 PM

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Tibbetts and I am a resident of Grand County (80446). I am a registered voter in the state of Colorado.

I am writing to support the large entertainment facility substance-free seating requirement.

I personally have been sober for 14 years. I would very much appreciate an opportunity for me and my family to attend events at large venues with sober seating opportunities. I was never aware of this concept, and I truly believe it would have helped me adjust better socially in my early years of sobriety. Often times, I just made the decision to not purchase a ticket instead of attending an event where I knew alcohol and drugs would be prevalent.

I believe that it is imperative at this time to show our communities that fun can be had without substances. It is important for people who have been abstaining from alcohol and/or drugs, for either one day or twenty years, to feel safe and included in Colorado events.

My husband - who does still drink - also believes that this bill is a good idea for many reasons and supports passing it through committee for a vote.

Thank you for documenting my support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tibbetts
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