

IN SUPPORT OF SB209 – CRIMINAL LAW – UNRULY SOCIAL GATHERINGS – CIVIL PENALTIES

My name is Aaron Springer and I am a resident of College Park, Maryland in Prince George's County. For 17 years I have worked on Town and Gown issues here in the City of College Park. Attempting as a resident to work with the city, UMPD, PGPD, UMDCP and my student Neighbors to help shape a shared livable environment. Our biggest issue here in College Park has been loud drunken parties, wandering drunk people stumbling around our neighborhood urinating publicly, vandalizing and other such nonsense. As well as doing themselves harm due to their intoxication.

Not much that the City or the university has done over the years has tamped this down until the university extended the student code of conduct code off campus. All other actions prior when dealing with drunk intoxicated students has been our existing criminal based on existing law and it has had no effect or little effect. However this has still not been enough to improve the quality and stability of our neighborhood as it relates to loud drunken social gatherings. The City of College Park recently introduced a series of civil penalty for parties of 8 people or more who are drunk and/or disorderly. This is not a criminal violation but rather it is a civil citation violation. Our version is loosely based on the one that is used in Baltimore County. When the city introduced this legislation and approved it the student population was shook to the Core. It was the first thing that ever got their attention, that somehow they could be held accountable for their inappropriate behavior.

This civil enforcement has readily gotten their attention. It has gotten the attention of the students so much so that they are fighting the city's adoption of this civil enforcement. Again this is not a criminal enforcement this is a civil citation enforcement and it is really woken the kids up to the fact they can be held accountable.

To the best of my knowledge when dealing with nuisance. Criminal justice best practice is to use civil remedies to divert low risk generally non criminal nuisance behavior. Civil citations and diversionary measures such as such as alcohol counseling are measured to be more effective in changing behavior than a criminal record. I hope that that language can be successfully adapted in SB209 to move in the direction of civil citation penalty as opposed an overly criminalized response There may be room for some criminal penalty but that would seem to be for an extreme situation. Again just the threat of civil penalty has put the UMD student residents here in a panic.

I hope that that SB209 can be adapted in such a way to work for the whole state of Maryland and all of it's many counties and local municipalities. Some form of SB209 would go a long way to finally give teeth to our many policing agencies here in Prince George's county by putting the weight of state law behind their drunk and disorderly enforcement. It would also help to take the heat off a municipality like College Park in dealing deal with our drunk and disorderly issues.

Respectfully,

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