

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building, Room 101  
Annapolis, MD 21401



**RE: OPPOSITION of House Bill 1217  
(Justice Reinvestment Act – Conditions of Release – Technical Revocation Caps)**

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee members,

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC), an advocacy organization that mobilizes community members for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs and anti- sex worker policies, opposes House Bill 1217.

This legislation would grant authority to judges and courts to determine that a person involved with the justice system who shows signs of drug use is a danger to themselves and should therefore be incarcerated for a longer period of time or forced to attend a drug treatment program.

While the intent of this legislation may be to give courts another tool to “help” people, it is, in effect, only another insidious way to further confine people against their will, even after they have successfully completed a jail or prison sentence. **This is mass incarceration dressed up as good intent.** If we, as Marylanders, want our neighbors to have the opportunity to get help, then we have to make high-quality, low-barrier options readily available. This bill does not move us closer to that goal.

Due to the criminalization of drug use and possession, people who use drugs are already over-represented in correctional facilities where they have inadequate access to healthcare. **It is well-documented that a coerced period of abstinence is not an effective method to assist someone with their recovery** – whether that forced abstinence is in jail or an undesired treatment program. HB1217 is an overreach of the power of the state to take away someone’s freedom.

For our safety and that of our loved ones, BHRC respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about BHRC or this position, please contact Tricia Christensen at [Tricia@BaltimoreHarmReduction.org](mailto:Tricia@BaltimoreHarmReduction.org)