



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman  
Maryland Federation of Republican Women  
PO Box 6040, Annapolis MD 21401  
Email: eee437@comcast.net

Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chairman  
and Members of the Judiciary Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: **HB 0481** -- Decriminalize Drug Paraphernalia for Administration into the Body – **OPPOSED**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women opposes HB 0481 that would repeal the prohibition against a person using or possessing with intent to use drug paraphernalia to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body a controlled dangerous substance.

Maryland was 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation for drug overdose deaths in 2019 according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) statistics. The fatal drug overdose rate in Maryland was 38.2 deaths per 100,000 people<sup>1</sup>. The average death rate nationally was 23.7 deaths – almost 40% lower than Maryland.

The CDC reports that from 2015 to 2017, nearly all racial/ethnic groups and age groups experienced significant increases in opioid-involved and synthetic opioid-involved overdoses death rates. The report indicated a need for culturally competent interventions targeted to populations at risk and expanding evidence-based interventions.<sup>2</sup> The report made no mention of decriminalizing paraphernalia.

Our efforts should be directed towards interdiction, not legalization. This legislation does nothing to help those addicted to drugs recover from their addiction or to reduce the drug-related crimes that are endangering our communities. Eliminating a misdemeanor charge for possession of paraphernalia serves no purpose in the fight against addiction.

Please give HB 0481 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Ella Ennis  
Legislative Chairman

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/drug\\_poisoning\\_mortality/drug\\_poisoning.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/drug_poisoning_mortality/drug_poisoning.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6843a3.htm>