



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 13, 2023

Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Delegate Jeffrie Long Jr., and I am honored to present HB317, which seeks to establish August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day in Maryland. This bill is essential to raising awareness and promoting public education on the dangers of substance abuse and drug overdose in our state.

As we all know, the opioid epidemic has devastated communities across our state and the country. This epidemic has particularly hard-hit Maryland. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this crisis, with social isolation and economic instability contributing to increased substance abuse and overdose rates. As a result of the pandemic, we saw fatal overdose deaths spike by 17.7% from 2,379 to 2,799 deaths a year, with all this being reported by the Maryland Department of Health.

Establishing August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day would allow us to recognize and remember those, we have lost to drug overdose and educate the public about the dangers of substance abuse and the resources available for those struggling with addiction. This day will also remind us of the importance of taking action to prevent further overdose deaths in our communities.

I believe that this bill is an essential step toward promoting public health and reducing the harm caused by substance abuse in our state. As a community, we must do everything we can to address this crisis and provide support for those struggling with addiction.

I urge this committee's favorable support of House Bill 317 and to work towards reducing the toll of a drug overdose in Maryland. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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