

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett  
Vice Chair, Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Bartlett,

I would like to express my full support for *House Bill 797 - Criminal Law - Money Laundering*.

Fentanyl has become a leading cause of death in the United States and in Maryland since data was first tracked in 2013. Nationally, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids in 2021 was 10 times the number in 1999 per the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Overdoses involving opioids killed more than 80,000 people in 2021, and nearly 88% of those deaths involved synthetic opioids.

Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids seriously contribute to the overall overdose deaths across the state and nation. Illegally made fentanyl is often added to other drugs because of its extreme potency, making drugs cheaper, more powerful, more addictive, and more dangerous.

In the State of Maryland, charges of money laundering can only be brought when that crime involves evidence of both monetary proceeds of at least \$10,000 and illegal drugs. HB 797 expands the authority of money laundering charges to be brought in crimes with proceeds over \$10,000 without the evidence of drugs. Additionally, while HB 797 maintains the current penalties for drug related offenses with proceeds over \$10,000, it also adds misdemeanor charges for those drug related offenses under \$10,000 if they involve fentanyl or any analogue of fentanyl, such as acetylfentanyl, butyrfentanyl, carfentanil, alfentanil, sufentanil, and remifentanil.

This proposed bill almost exactly mirrors 18 USC 1956, a federal money laundering statute. Criminal organizations involved in the drug trade are very adept at keeping the drugs they produce and sell separate from the money they make from doing so. Changing the requirement from “money and drugs” to “money or drugs” allows for law enforcement to prosecute large-scale operations on the bases of the evidence available.

I strongly urge this committee to give *House Bill 797 - Criminal Law - Money Laundering* the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David Trone  
Member of Congress