

Testimony in support of HB 39  
Prohibition on Transfer of Human Immunodeficiency Virus – Repeal  
House Judiciary Committee  
January 28, 2025

Claudia Taccheri  
District 46

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 39. My name is Claudia Taccheri and I am a medical student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. I am writing today to express support for HB 39 to decriminalize the transmission of HIV.

Laws which criminalize the transmission of HIV have proven ineffective and counterproductive to public health policies. Studies have shown that HIV criminalization laws do not reduce infection rates and that they further stigmatize people with HIV and discourage engagement with evidence-based prevention and harm reduction practices.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Thus, such laws have been opposed by several public health organizations, including the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

The decriminalization of HIV transmission is also an important measure to improve health equity. Black, Latino, and LGBTQ+ communities are disproportionately impacted by HIV, receive lower rates of treatment and viral suppression, and are adversely affected by the inequitable implementation and enforcement of HIV criminalization laws.<sup>4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup> In Maryland, 30% of the population is Black but 82% of all HIV-related cases were brought against Black people, demonstrating that these laws are disproportionately used against a community that faces significant marginalization from healthcare.<sup>12</sup>

The landscape of HIV care has changed dramatically since this prohibition went into effect, and the time has come to bring the law up to date with medical and public health research and evidence on effective prevention and treatment strategies. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 39.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Claudia Taccheri

928 N. Calvert Street  
Baltimore MD, 21202

---

<sup>1</sup> Walrod A. When saliva is a crime: reforming Mississippi's HIV criminalization law utilizing the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Policy Analytical Framework. [honors thesis]. Hattiesburg: University of Southern Mississippi; 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Galletly CL, Pinkerton SD. Conflicting messages: how criminal HIV disclosure laws undermine public health efforts to control the spread of HIV. *AIDS Behav* 2006;10(5):451-61. doi:10.1007/s10461-006-9117-3.

<sup>3</sup> Halkitis PN, Griffin-Tomas M. HIV criminalization and the public's health: policy considerations in the era of Treatment as Prevention (TasP) and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). *Psychology and AIDS Exchange Newsletter*. American Psychological Association; March 2017.

<sup>4</sup> CDC. Diagnoses of HIV infection in the United States and dependent areas, 2019. *HIV Surveillance Report* 2019;32.

<sup>5</sup> The Center for HIV Law and Policy. Prisons and jails. [web page].

<sup>6</sup> The Lancet HIV. Racial inequities in HIV. [editorial]. *The Lancet HIV* 2020;7(7):e449. doi:10.1016/S2352-3018(20)30173-9.

<sup>7</sup> Hasenbush A. HIV criminalization in Georgia: penal implications for people living with HIV/AIDS. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law; January 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Sears B, Goldberg SK. HIV criminalization in Florida: evaluation of transmission risk. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law; February 2020

<sup>9</sup> Cisneros N, Sears B. Enforcement of HIV criminalization in Louisiana. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law; September 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Sears B, Goldberg SK, Mallory C. The criminalization of HIV and hepatitis B and C in Missouri: an analysis of enforcement data from 1990 to 2019. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law; February 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Lambda Legal. HIV stigma and discrimination in the U.S.: an evidence-based report. 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Enforcement of HIV Criminalization in Maryland. Williams Institute. Accessed January 24, 2025.

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/hiv-crim-md/>