

Statement to the Health and Governmental Operations Committee:

I'm writing to submit my written testimony in strong support of HB1516, Washington County – Opioid–Associated Disease Prevention and Outreach 2Program –Prohibition on Establishment.

I support this bill, first and foremost, because I am a parent in the state of Maryland. I don't want a drug paraphernalia distribution program in my county because I'm wholly unconvinced that such a program will reduce drug use or disease transmission in my community. On the contrary, I feel that the program would expose minors to risk by making drug paraphernalia readily available without parental knowledge or consent, thus encouraging minors to *become* drug users who had not previously experimented with drugs. I'm disappointed that a government program would undermine my ability as a parent to protect my child from exposure to drug paraphernalia, and thus, potential first-time experimentation with drug use.

The program exposes small children to risk of exposure to used needle sticks, as evidenced by a toddler reported in the news who was stuck with a needle in her lip. The vast majority of drug-related deaths are not from infectious disease transmission, but rather from overdoses. There is no compelling evidence that the opioid outreach program saves more lives than it compromises, when the program potentially facilitates or encourages minors to become drug users. This bill allows counties to set drug prevention and treatment programs appropriate to their citizens' needs.

I hope that a similar bill is introduced in my county by my Delegates, and I strongly support this effort which will make Washington County a safer community for parents and their children.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Best regards,

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