



MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

SB 784 Criminal Law - Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance - De Minimis Quantity
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee March 8, 2022

FAVORABLE

The criminalization of drug possession is the largest driver of arrests in the United States. Of 1.6 million annual drug arrests in the U.S., over 80% are for possession only.

There is no evidence that arrest or incarceration reduces drug use. It is not clear why we as a society persist in using our resources to arrest people for possession of small quantities of drugs.

This approach is destructive and disproportionately affects black and brown communities.

The ripple effect from the separation of families and the disconnection of community social networks is devastating. Maryland funds efforts to address poverty and unemployment, while also ruining job prospects with a criminal record.

Our taxpayer dollars for criminal justice do the most harm to the people who need the most help.

This bill would complement the goals of the Justice Reinvestment Act, as well as successful LEAD programs (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion), both of which divert drug offenses from the criminal justice system.

When Portugal decriminalized small amounts of all illicit drugs, HIV infection rates plummeted, and overdose deaths dropped by over 80% in the 15 years after decriminalization.

Portugal's decriminalization law has not led to increases in drug use. It has decisively lowered problematic drug use and improved health outcomes.

Joseph A. Adams, MD, FASAM, Chair, Public Policy Committee