



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Testimony on Maryland House Bill 953 Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program

TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health & Government Operations Committee

FROM: Wanda Bannerman, Progressive Maryland Drug Policy Taskforce Leader, Prince George's County (D27A)

DATE: February 28, 2023

POSITION: Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB 953. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with 9 chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong support for this bill.

It is sad to say we humans are so fragile and weak that drug use seems to be the way many people deal with problems. In a perfect world, there would be no need for drug illicit drug use. We are not living in a perfect world! In our sad, difficult life, many people find escape through drugs. These drugs sometimes ruin their future and take their lives many times they go to jail and harm their bodies. If we can find a way to at least allow people to live through this tragic experience then perhaps they can get on the road to recovery. Inside of an overdose prevention site, our community members could find a safe environment to use and maybe find a way out, a way back to a safe normal life.

I beg you to agree to try this please for us to work as a community and save people. We should review and understand how these sites have helped other communities. There is no cost-effectiveness for simply locking people up.

Thank you for your time and attention. We urge a favorable report.