



2221 Maryland Ave, Baltimore 21217

marylandcu.org

**Testimony in Favor of HB 953
Health and Government Operations Committee**

Baltimore's premiere organizing and advocacy non-profit of low to moderate-income persons most impacted by systems of injustice proudly submits this written testimony of our strong support of SB0279 to authorize overdose prevention sites (OPS) in the State of Maryland.

We were founded in 2010 with the purpose of organizing members in stigmatized communities including neighborhoods of socially ill-repute. Our organizing efforts in Baltimore's Gilmore homes and McCulloh Homes (Baltimore's 40th Legislative District) provide essential education to drug users and communities that love and depend upon them. This education has led our people to say, "Yes", to OPS. They cannot refuse the opportunity to save lives! This outweighs the stigma that causes others to vote against harm reduction efforts.

We humbly, yet fervently ask that this committee takes a stand against death. Take a stand against further harm and against unsubstantiated stigma. Take a stand to make Maryland a leader in preventing overdoses. The number of homicide deaths is a public health crisis as is the amount of youth we lose. Overdose deaths do not have an age and should be addressed with the same sense of urgency. We are losing our people but we have a solution, and that is OPS!

Thank you,
LaToya Nettles
Parent Organizer
Communities United