



# 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:** Eryck Stamper, Progressive Maryland Drug Policy Taskforce Leader, Baltimore (D46)

**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.

I'm writing to urge you to support HB 953. The creation of an important program like the Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Service Program is important to me and I believe many in my local community and state as a whole will benefit from its offerings and language.

This afternoon I went outside to walk a guest to their vehicle. We had to dodge various needles, plungers and broken drug burned glass in the gutter and area next to their car. A real sad, painful and embarrassing moment as a property as I have pride in ownership and care for our community. As a father attempting to raise my daughter in a clean, healthy, safe and sound environment, this is nor acceptable. She's 12 years old and not even allowed beyond the limited bounds of our small yard and chained fence alone (how did we play at 12?). I can't trust many areas we traverse as we see people literally strung out laying on the street or doing the "gangster lean" in drug induced states, fighting and screaming over drugs and money. This is traumatic coming from a military Veteran who suffers medical conditions and even harmful on the forming brain of a young girl. I can't keep my blinders on and ignore it any longer as I travel our great state of Maryland. These are hard realities to face and even harder questions and daily reminders to answer to my daughter in our current state.

We urge a favorable report.