

Joseph Fox  
Hagerstown  
SB0532

**Testimony of Joseph Fox**  
**FAVof SB0532**  
**Criminal Law - Overdosing in Public - Prohibition**

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Joseph Fox, and I support SB0532. I live at 914 Lanvale Street in Hagerstown and attend South Hagerstown High School. I also serve as Chair of the Hagerstown Youth Council although I am not testifying on their behalf.

I, like many people in Hagerstown and Washington County, am very aware of how the use of opioids and other drugs deeply affects our communities. When walking or driving around Hagerstown it is not uncommon to see someone on the street who has overdosed. And, it is common to see the same people as you've seen before. Time and time again, I have seen criminal punishments fail to move someone off of drugs. They pay their fine or serve their time and immediately are back to where they were. So it is finally time to ask "What are we doing to actually help these people?" And I, like many people in Hagerstown and Washington County, am very close with someone that has had their life completely changed through the use of these drugs. They had their entire life flipped upside down. The actions they did in their pursuit of drugs lost the trust of their family and friends. Their entire way of life was changed. But, through the support of family, they were encouraged to enter a substance abuse program where their life has been put back on track. It was only through these substance abuse programs that they found themselves living a sober life, not from criminal punishment. I've seen firsthand how these substance abuse treatment programs can help these people get back on their feet and become active members of the community once again. This is truly a piece of common-sense legislation that moves us one step forward to properly treating drug addiction in this state. Thank you for your consideration.