

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General



CANDACE McLAREN LANHAM
Chief of Staff

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.
(410) 576-7036

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.
(410) 576-6584

February 2, 2023

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: HB 0173 – Drug Paraphernalia for Administration – Decriminalization
(Support)

The Office of Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 173, Vice Chair Moon's bill to remove Controlled Dangerous Substance ("CDS") paraphernalia used for administration or consumption of CDS (as opposed to paraphernalia for manufacture or distribution) from the criminal prohibitions related to CDS paraphernalia. House Bill 173 also lower the penalties related to CDS paraphernalia used for manufacture/distribution.

As the opioid pandemic has illustrated, drug use and abuse are public health hazards that should be addressed holistically. Criminalizing drug users, as opposed to treating them, can be costly and counterproductive. House Bill 173 is a commonsense measure to decriminalize the mere possession of drug paraphernalia.

We urge a favorable report on HB 173.

cc: Committee Members

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or sbrantley@oag.state.md.us