

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 173
(Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization) - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee Members,

I am a lifelong resident of the state of Maryland who supports House Bill 173 (Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization) which will revise existing criminal law to remove items that could be used to consume drugs from what is considered drug paraphernalia, effectively decriminalizing possession of those items.

I am a person in long-term recovery who thankfully made it to the other side and have abstained from use of illicit substances for 6 years this month. Many of the people I knew during my darker days are still suffering and are in desperate need of services that keep them safe and alive, such as those provided by syringe services programs across our great state. The fear of being picked up by law enforcement while possessing syringes for injection drug use, even when given an ID card by an authorized program and even with an understanding of the protections afforded to them by enrollment in an authorized syringe services program, prevent many from accessing these services that reduce overdose, reduce transmission of infectious disease, save taxpayer dollars, and save the lives of Marylanders every day.

HB 173 would afford additional protections and increase uptake of syringe services, leading to less death, less disease, and more people accessing recovery in the way that I have.

I believe that this bill will simplify Maryland's paraphernalia laws and clarify that possession of harm reduction supplies to prevent infectious disease is not a crime. **I ask that the Judiciary Committee give HB173 a favorable report.**

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