

7 February 2023

Judiciary Committee

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Vote YES on House Bill 173

Delegates of the Judiciary Committee,

I support House Bill 173 and the decriminalization of drug paraphernalia. Research into the causes of drug use indicate that people need social and medical intervention when they use drugs—not criminal stigma. The criminalization of needles and other paraphernalia chills the acquisition of clean tools, which exacerbates negative health outcomes.

We have implemented decades of policies that criminalize drug use with little to show for it. Tragically, drug use continues with terrible consequences for our communities. The answer cannot be to double down on policies that push people into the shadows. We must enact policies that decriminalize use, so that we can better manage the harms of drug use and encourage people to seek the medical and social intervention necessary to treat the root causes of drug use. House Bill 173 is a positive step in that direction.

Sincerely,

Alexander Payne

Resident of House District 46

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