



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 1245, *Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria and Scottie's Law)*

Dear Chair Clippinger,

I urge the Committee to support House Bill 1245, Criminal Law - Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria and Scottie's Law), which would increase the maximum imprisonment term to 20 years for someone convicted of selling drugs laced with fentanyl, heroin, or synthetic opioids that resulted in the buyer's death. The Bill would also allow for the prosecution of all individuals convicted in involvement in the distribution and delivery of the drug that resulted in the buyer's death.

Just two milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal and such doses are commonly tested and found mixed into otherwise legitimate appearing prescription pills as well as illicit nasal sprays and powders.¹ Overdose deaths due to fentanyl use present an urgent public health crisis that the State must provide every tool available - including more significant penalties for distribution of a deadly dose - to local jurisdictions as we attempt to deter and prevent further tragedy. While Montgomery County² and many other jurisdictions have pursued legal remedies against corporations that profited off of the opioid addiction and deaths of members of our community, we must do more to address the illicit drug market.

From January to June 2023, there were 2,202 unintentional fentanyl, heroin, or opioid related deaths in the State of Maryland and 126 in Montgomery County,³ a number that continues

¹ <https://www.dea.gov/resources/facts-about-fentanyl>

² https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=21829

³ https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/Quarterly%20Reports/2023_Q2_IntoxReport.pdf

the marked upward trend of these overdoses in our communities since 2016 and yet another blaring warning sign that our laws and policies are not adequate to stem this epidemic or stop those who profit off it.

I'm grateful for the increased awareness of how to use Narcan to treat emergency overdoses, a significant and widespread initiative that the Montgomery County Council has consistently supported. This public health crisis impacts all of our communities, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status and it will require a holistic and collective effort to address it. House Bill 1245 recognizes this by maintaining immunity for any individual who acts as a good samaritan to seek or provide medical assistance for someone experiencing an overdose.

Please support this legislation for more effective deterrence and accountability for those who engage in the illicit drug trade or who are responsible for the death and addiction of far too many in our State and County.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Luedtke', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Luedtke
Montgomery County Councilmember
District 7

cc: Members of the Judiciary Committee