



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

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

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1245, *Criminal Law – Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria and Scottie’s Law)*. The bill would prohibit an individual from distributing heroin or fentanyl that results in the death or serious bodily injury to another. The penalty upon conviction would increase from 10 years in jail to up to 20 years in jail – in alignment with federal law. The bill would further allow for the prosecution of a person to be brought in either the County where the drug violation occurred or in the County where the death or serious injury from the drug occurred.

Like the rest of the United States, Montgomery County has seen an increase in fentanyl overdose deaths that have had a heartbreaking impact on many families in our communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 112,000 people died in the United States in 2023 of drug overdoses and poisonings, with almost 70% of those deaths attributed to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. It is no wonder. The Drug Enforcement Administration reports that fentanyl is approximately 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.

This is not a new issue. For that reason, individuals trafficking in this deadly synthetic opioid must understand that there are serious criminal penalties for being involved in the distribution of what can lead to a fentanyl-induced death or serious bodily injury. Families across the State who have experienced an injury related to illicit fentanyl or suffered the loss of a loved one due to a fentanyl overdose, deserve to have justice.

I urge that the Committee adopt a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Judiciary Committee