

Feb 9, 2024

The Honorable Senator Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 0706

Drug Paraphernalia for Administration – Decriminalization - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Delegate Luke Clippinger and Judiciary Committee Members,

On behalf of the Good Trouble Church, I am writing to express our unwavering support for HB0706. This legislation will revise existing criminal law by removing items that could be used to consume drugs from their classification as drug paraphernalia. Many of us, including myself, have lived and or living experience with drug use.

For many years, the punitive policies enacted in the name of the racist war on drugs have forced people who use drugs to face incarceration, suffer social and emotional isolation, and engage in risky behaviors that put their health and that of others at risk. We believe that our community and every community in Maryland deserve more. We believe people who use drugs deserve dignity, respect, equitable health care, and justice. HB0706 is a step towards healing instead of harm.

Every scientific and medical organization to study the issue has shown that legal access to sterile supplies reduces the spread of HIV, hepatitis, and other blood-borne diseases. For these health benefits to materialize in Maryland, people who use drugs need to feel as though they can access supplies without law enforcement repercussions.

Allowing people to use drugs more safely with the proper tools is positive for everyone in the community- not only in slowing/stopping the spread of infectious disease, but also in lifting the stigma that isolates people who use drugs.

In 2021, this bill successfully passed through the general assembly where it was then vetoed by then Governor, Larry Hogan. We hope that under the new administration, this legislation may have an opportunity to once again be codified into law. We urge you to give HB0706 a favorable vote.

Thank You,
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