

Board of County Commissioners

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Carroll County Government

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Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

We are writing to express our support for **House Bill 1398: Criminal Law – Distribution of Heroin or Fentanyl Causing Serious Bodily Injury or Death (Victoria, Scottie, Ashleigh, and Yader's Law)**. This bill is a crucial step in addressing the ongoing opioid crisis that continues to affect families and communities across Maryland.

As a county that has felt the impact of heroin, fentanyl, and other opioids firsthand, we know how critical it is to have stronger measures in place to combat the illegal distribution of these dangerous substances. By increasing penalties for those whose illegal distribution causes serious harm, this bill supports our efforts to protect our residents and reduce opioid-related fatalities.

In Carroll County, we've seen the toll that opioid-related deaths and injuries take on our community. Beyond the heartache these tragedies cause, they significantly strain our public health systems, law enforcement, and emergency services. This bill builds on our existing laws by holding those responsible for causing irreversible harm accountable with tougher penalties, which aligns with our ongoing commitment to public safety and reducing opioid-related fatalities.

Furthermore, House Bill 1398's inclusion of protections for individuals who seek emergency medical help for someone experiencing a drug overdose is a vital aspect of this legislation. By encouraging good faith efforts to save lives without the fear of prosecution, the bill supports a compassionate and life-saving approach that can help break the cycle of addiction and loss.

While we recognize that the bill could result in increased state spending, primarily due to longer incarceration times, we believe the long-term benefits—reducing opioid-related harm and saving lives—are worth the investment. This bill is a critical part of the broader effort to tackle Maryland's opioid crisis.

We respectfully request that you give House Bill 1398 your full support and pass it through the committee with a FAVORABLE report. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to our communities' safety and well-being.

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY

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