

March 11, 2025

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1164.

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

HB1164 would codify protections of basic life and liberty for people experiencing homelessness. NAMI Maryland believes that people experiencing homelessness are due all the rights and privileges of all other citizens of our state and that a person who is sleeping outside, staying for long periods of time in a public space, sleeping in a legally parked vehicle, and other activities listed in HB1164 should be afforded the same level of privacy and dignity as anyone else.

Untreated or undertreated mental health conditions are a leading cause of homelessness and NAMI advocates nationwide expressed disappointment with the unfortunate United States Supreme Court opinion in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*.¹ NAMI Maryland appreciates that HB1164 would provide protections for Marylanders experiencing homelessness that may no longer be available to people in other states.

For those reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB1164.

¹ NAMI Statement on Supreme Court Decision Allowing Communities to Criminalize Homelessness, <https://www.nami.org/press-releases/nami-statement-on-supreme-court-decision-allowing-communities-to-criminalize-homelessness/>.

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