



CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief Operating Officer

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

January 28, 2025

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Tiffany Clark
Chief, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 260 – Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia - Prohibitions and Penalties- **Support**

The Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges this Committee to report favorably on **House Bill 260** - Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia - Prohibitions and Penalties - with amendments. **House Bill 260** (1) lowers the penalty for a second or subsequent offense for using or possessing with the intent of using drug paraphernalia from two years to one year and (2) lowers the penalty from four years to one year for certain offenses related to controlled paraphernalia.

As the opioid pandemic has illustrated, drug use and abuse are public health hazards that should be addressed holistically. Criminalizing drug users, as opposed to treating them, can be costly and counterproductive. However, does not hold true for the individuals who are manufacturing and distributing the drugs that create the public health hazard. Manufacturers and distributors should still be held accountable for the harms they are causing to communities. OAG holds no position on the provision that lowers penalties for controlled paraphernalia.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable with amendments report on **House Bill 260**.

cc: Judiciary Committee members