



Testimony on HB556 Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization Position: **FAV**

To Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, with 10,000 members in Maryland and Washington, DC. 1199SEIU urges a **favorable** report on HB556 to remove syringes from the list of prohibited paraphernalia and reduce penalties for possession of syringes for personal use.

Passing this bill is an important step in managing the substance use crisis and improving public health. Decriminalizing possession of syringes can encourage people struggling with substance use disorders to seek treatment and access health programs that are effective in reducing drug dependence and preventing overdoses.

Criminalization is not a solution to a public health issue. This legislation will ensure Maryland is taking the right approach. Please vote YES on HB556. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Ricarra Jones
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