



# LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: February 6, 2025

Re: HB 556 - Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration -  
Decriminalization

Position: **SUPPORT**

To: The Honorable Chair Delegate Luke Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee

Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

As an organization of law enforcement professionals, the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is writing to express our support for House Bill (HB) 556 - Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization. This bill will amend existing criminal law to remove certain items that could be used to consume drugs from what is considered “drug paraphernalia,” effectively decriminalizing possession of those items.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, promoting alternatives to arrest and incarceration, addressing the root causes of crime, and working toward healing police-community relations.

Treating substance use as a matter for the courts rather than a public health issue does nothing to reduce drug use. Instead, it pushes individuals further into the criminal justice system for mere possession of objects, not for committing harm or engaging in trafficking. This outdated approach creates barriers to care, employment, and stability without improving public safety.

[Current laws fail as a deterrent and instead](#) discourage individuals from accessing harm reduction tools that prevent overdose and disease transmission. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), access to sterile supplies

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*Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition*

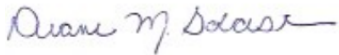
[reduces HIV transmission by nearly 50%](#) and significantly decreases cases of hepatitis C. Yet, fear of arrest often prevents people from carrying or using these life-saving tools. HB 556 will remove this unnecessary legal barrier, ensuring that people can access harm reduction resources without the threat of criminalization.

Paraphernalia laws also divert police resources from real public safety threats. [Arrests for personal-use paraphernalia do not disrupt drug markets or reduce violent crime.](#) Focusing on low-level offenses, such as paraphernalia possession, consumes officer time and taxpayer dollars without yielding significant public safety benefits. Redirecting these resources toward harm reduction and treatment initiatives could enhance community health outcomes and allow law enforcement to concentrate on more pressing issues.

We believe that this bill will simplify Maryland's paraphernalia laws and clarify that possession of harm reduction supplies to prevent infectious disease is not a crime. We ask that the House Judiciary Committee give HB 556 a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)  
Redondo Beach Police Department  
Executive Director, The Law Enforcement Action Partnership