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Date: March 10, 2026

Re: MD HB 1477 - Veterans Mental Health Innovations Act

Position: SUPPORT

To: The Maryland House Health Committee

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

As an organization of law enforcement professionals, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) writes in support of HB 1477, the Veterans Mental Health Innovation Act. This legislation would allow Maryland to participate in FDA regulated clinical research into ibogaine as a potential treatment for veterans living with serious, treatment resistant conditions.

LEAP is an international nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience serving in the justice system. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, addressing the root causes of crime, and working toward healing police-community relations.

Across jurisdictions and professional roles, we have witnessed how untreated trauma, addiction, and mental health crises repeatedly intersect with public safety systems. Law enforcement officers often encounter individuals at the worst moments of their lives, when treatment systems have already failed. For many veterans, traumatic brain injury further complicates diagnosis and treatment, creating challenges that traditional treatment approaches have struggled to resolve.

Traumatic brain injury has become one of the defining wounds of military service. Research conducted within the Veterans Health Administration has found that approximately 85% of veterans diagnosed with traumatic brain injury also experience at least one psychiatric condition, and nearly two-thirds face multiple diagnoses. These overlapping challenges contribute to complex, treatment resistant cases that strain families, healthcare systems, and public safety resources alike.

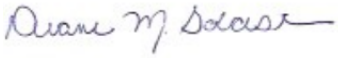
Across the country, law enforcement leaders are increasingly recognizing that public safety cannot rely solely on enforcement after harm occurs. It must also support solutions that prevent crises before they reach our communities. Carefully structured clinical research, as proposed through HB 1477, allows states to responsibly explore new approaches under rigorous oversight, ensuring that policy decisions are guided by evidence, as we acknowledge the need for innovative thinking to meet the current crises.

Early research suggests ibogaine treatment has led to promising results for individuals facing severe, treatment resistant conditions. HB 1477 allows Maryland to help determine whether this treatment can safely become part of the solution. From a public safety perspective, reducing untreated trauma and addiction among veterans strengthens families, stabilizes communities, and reduces the burden placed on law enforcement responding to crisis situations.

For these reasons, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) urges favorable consideration of House Bill 1477.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
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