

February 6, 2026

The Honorable Sandy Bartlett
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 100
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 551
(Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia and Controlled Paraphernalia Prohibitions - Repeal) -
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and House Judiciary Committee Members,

I, Jordan Williams I. of Baltimore City Public Schools, strongly supports House Bill 551 (Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia and Controlled Paraphernalia Prohibitions - Repeal) which will end all penalties for drug paraphernalia. This is a common-sense, evidence-based bill that prioritizes the health and safety of all Marylanders.

As a public school teacher and a Maryland resident for over 10 years, I am writing in support of this bill because of what I see—not in theory, but in real life, in my community, and around my students. Over the years, I have come across used syringes discarded on sidewalks, near school grounds, and in public spaces where children walk every day. These are not abstract public health concerns - they are immediate safety issues for students, families, and educators who are simply trying to move through their neighborhoods without fear of accidental exposure or injury.

Current paraphernalia laws unintentionally make our public spaces less safe. When people who use drugs or have substance use disorders are forced to choose between carrying used supplies and risking arrest, or discarding them immediately in public spaces, the law pushes people toward the option that creates more harm for everyone. The safest choice - proper disposal - should not also be the most legally risky. As a teacher, my priority is the well-being of my students. As a Maryland resident and parent, family member, and neighbor, I want cleaner, safer public areas where children can walk, play, and learn without encountering hazardous waste. Laws that discourage safe disposal do the opposite of what they are intended to do. This bill makes sense because it prioritizes public health, community safety, and harm reduction in a practical, evidence-based way. It supports safer behavior, reduces the presence of dangerous materials in shared spaces, and helps create the healthy environments our youth deserve. We all want Maryland communities that are safe, compassionate, and forward-thinking. Updating our laws to reflect these values is an important step in protecting our students and strengthening our neighborhoods.

I, Jordan Williams, believe that this bill will keep our youth safe, our neighborhoods healthy, and keep legally obtained items legal. I ask that the House Judiciary Committee give HB551 a favorable report.

For more information about this position, please contact Jordan Williams at jwilljsa@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Jordan Williams
Teacher at Baltimore City Public Schools