

KAREN SIMPSON
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Frederick County

Judiciary Committee
Chair
Family Law Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Favorable: HB551 - Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia and Controlled Paraphernalia Prohibitions - Repeal

Hearing on 2/10/2026 at 1:00pm

To: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and my Fellow Members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB 556 repeals Maryland's Drug Paraphernalia law. Let's stop penalizing legally purchased items such as spoons.

This is a public health bill to reduce harm, disease transmission, and overdose deaths. It is an effort to support our recovery healthcare providers. This bill aligns our public policy with evidence-based public health.

We can tackle our community health substance abuse crisis without shaming people for having items they can legally buy at any pharmacy. Our drug paraphernalia laws do not keep us safer. They do not stop the production, distribution, or usage of drugs.

The opposition has begged us for decades to not take their tool away – a tool that has never worked, has never helped, a tool that isn't broken. Broken implies that this law used to work and needs to be fixed. Our paraphernalia laws are not broken. They are not tools. They are a distraction from serious crimes, and they are a threat and weapon against our struggling communities and the people trying to serve them.

Harsh paraphernalia penalties for possessing legally purchased items do not address our substance abuse crisis. Paraphernalia laws isolate people and scare individuals from joining our harm reduction teams who provide access to clean supplies.

Our harm reduction teams reduce overdose, eliminate disease transmission, and lead our friends and family to treatment and recovery.

This bill removes obstacles to treatment. Let's show our support for our harm reduction community with a favorable report for HB551.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen Simpson".

Karen Simpson, District 3