

February 3, 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, Dillon McManus, strongly support 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.

I am a Baltimore City resident with over a decade of experience in social work, public health, and harm reduction.

Ending penalties for paraphernalia is a simple and clear way for a number of important public health and public safety outcomes to take place. It would make it easier for syringe service programs and their participants to understand the legal protections allotted to them, it would reduce confusion among law enforcement about what is and isn't protected materials and reduce time and labor taken to filing paraphernalia charges that would be dropped later, and reduce syringe/paraphernalia litter that they would come in contact with. Further, it would allow the state's Rapid Analysis of Drugs program to expand beyond syringe service programs and allow other programs to be able to sample – thus having a much greater awareness of how the drug supply changes in specific places overtime and being able to develop responses to emerging substances.

[We/I] believe that this bill will simplify Maryland's criminal law, improve our state's infectious disease and overdose prevention response, and keep legally obtained items legal. **We ask that the House Judiciary Committee give HB551 a favorable report.**

For more information about this position, please contact Dillon McManus, Dillon.mcmanus22@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Dillon McManus

Baltimore City

