



# RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES  
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2022 Session  
HB0481

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## Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization

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### Summary

This bill alters statutory provisions related to (1) “controlled paraphernalia”; (2) the prohibition on the use of or possession with the intent to use drug paraphernalia; and (3) penalties for offenses involving controlled paraphernalia and drug paraphernalia.

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### Maryland Demographics

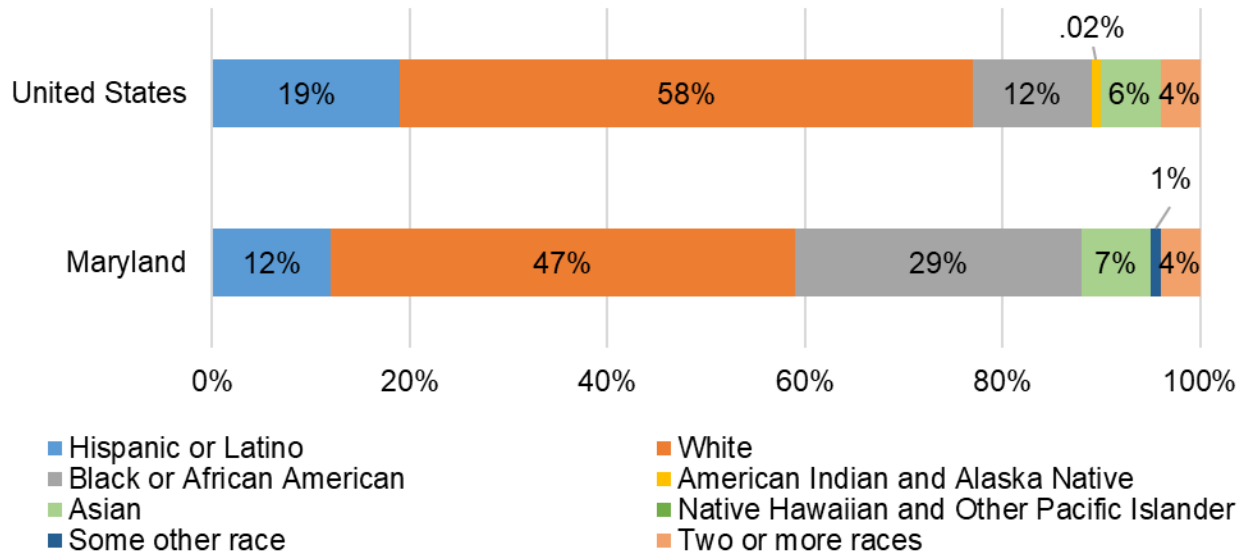
#### *Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population*

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. In addition to an increase in population, Maryland’s racial demographics have become more diverse. Maryland is now a state in which racial minorities make up a majority of its total population. Notable changes relevant to this shift are the increase in groups who identify as “other” and “multiracial” (*i.e.*, two or more racial identities), which total 5% of the State’s population. Additionally, the change in demographics is due to the decrease in the number of individuals who only report “White” as their racial group. Despite this decrease, non-Hispanic Whites remain the largest single race demographic group in the State of Maryland comprising 47% of the State’s population.

Compared to the U.S. population overall, Maryland’s population of individuals who identify as a single race is more diverse. Maryland is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). As shown in **Exhibit 1**, in Maryland, 47% identify as White alone compared to 58% of the national population. Similarly, 51% of the population identify as non-White or multi-racial compared to 38% of the national population. In both the State and national population, the largest shares of the non-White population are individuals who are Black or African American, with 29% of the State population identifying only as Black or African American and another 2.5% identifying as Black in combination with some other race. Maryland’s Asian population is 7%, which is slightly higher than the Asian share of the national population of

6%. The State’s overall population by ethnicity, however, is slightly less diverse than the U.S. population; 12% of the State’s population identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to 19% of the U.S. population.

**Exhibit 1**  
**U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity**  
**2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171), Table ID P2, HISPANIC OR LATINO, AND NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO BY RACE.

### **Racial Equity Impact Statement**

The bill alters the definition of controlled paraphernalia to remove a hypodermic syringe, needle, or any other object or combination of objects adapted to administer a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) by hypodermic injection. Accordingly, the bill alters an element of the criminal prohibition against possession or distribution of controlled paraphernalia to include possession or distribution of controlled paraphernalia for purposes of manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing (rather than administering) a CDS.

The bill also reduces penalties related to controlled paraphernalia from a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment and/or a \$25,000 fine to a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and/or a \$1,000 fine.

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## Conclusion

Generally, the bill's modified definition of controlled paraphernalia will decrease the number of individuals charged and sentenced for CDS paraphernalia offenses. The bill's reduced penalties will also shorten the incarceration period for those jailed for violating prohibitions against the use or possession of certain drug paraphernalia and delivery or sale of drug paraphernalia.

The bill's impact on various demographic groups cannot be reliably estimated as no detailed public data is available on arrests and sentencing for drug paraphernalia offenses. The annual Uniform Crime Report published by the Department of State Police releases composite data on various drug-related and other offenses but does not isolate paraphernalia arrests as a separate offense. Determining the actual racial equity impacts of the bill would require data that captures the racial distribution of penalties related to use and possession of hypodermic syringes, needles, or any other object or combination of objects adapted to administer a CDS by hypodermic injection.

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**Information Sources:** Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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