

Testimony on Maryland House Bill Number HB1054

Bill Name: De Minimis Quantity

TO: Dels. David Moon, Vice Chair, Jon Cardin, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Joanne M Gigliotti, Gaithersburg, Maryland, Montgomery County, State Legislative District # 17

DATE: March 8, 2022

POSITION: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with nine chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. Also, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong support for this bill.

I'm a member on Progressive Maryland's Drug Policy Task Force. We envision a society where there is equal opportunity for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs. We believe that harm reduction is a part of a broader movement for racial and social justice.

Actually I've not had any personal or family experience with drug arrests. However, through hearing stories, seeing videos and the studies of this group, I've become very aware of the unfairness of these situations. By listening first hand to the actual testimony of persons who have been incarcerated for possession of substance that is now, or will be, legal and and yet can't even get out, is heartbreaking.

The incarceration of people for having small amounts of drugs does nothing to help them, nor does it bring justiceto anyone. Jail is inappropriate for a big drug problem, and not nessesary for an adult choosing to use. This is not a War on Drugs, it's a war on the afflicted or targeted person. The additional travasty is for those who got jail time becasue they couldn't afford the fine. That's not equatable, not useful at best and devastating at worst.

Passing this bill would bring the criminal justice system into the 21st century and make it more equitable and more appropriate. Most of all, it will make it closer to our country's ideal of equal justice for all.

I strongly urge a favorable report on this legislation.

Sincerely,

**Joanne M Gigliotti
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