



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 185

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-203-9881

FAX 410-203-9891

Rich Gibson
President

Steven I. Kroll
Coordinator

DATE: February 28, 2023

BILL NUMBER: HB 927

POSITION: Unfavorable

The Maryland State's Attorney's Association (MSAA) opposes HB 927.

HB 927 decriminalizes the possession of certain amounts of a wide variety of narcotics to include cocaine, heroin, LSD and illegally procured oxycodone, among others. This legislation further classifies these amounts as "de minimis" and includes a possessory civil penalty and citation structure similar to recent alterations decriminalizing possession of marijuana under 10 grams.

Decriminalizing the possession of assorted narcotics does little to address issues surrounding the illicit sale and consumption of these substances, which includes organized crime, violence and public health concerns. Decriminalization sends an adverse message to the public and to children, essentially validating an attitude that these substances are insignificant. They are not. The adverse physical effects of the substances outlined in the bill destroy families as well as communities and could lead to an increase of drug users. Further, the illicit drug trade involving these narcotics would undoubtedly proliferate should narcotics dealers be granted a pathway to safe harbor.

This legislation fails to solve any real issue surrounding the harm to communities caused by these substances.

For these reasons, the MSAA requests an unfavorable report on HB 927.