

SUPPORT HB 3447: REDUCING BARRIERS TO RECOVERY

- ▶ **Reclassifies the penalty for small-scale drug possession from a felony to a Class A misdemeanor.**
- ▶ **Offers real diversion in the form of behavioral health assessments and access to treatment for people who need it, rather than incarceration.**
- ▶ **Creates pathways for people living with felony convictions for drug possession to expunge their records.**

HB 3447 (Ammons/Bush) would strengthen Illinois communities by elevating a public health approach to reducing the harms associated with drug use, replacing the failed strategy of punishment and incarceration:

- ✔ **Enables people arrested for possessing drugs to continue living and working in their communities, while connecting them to services they may need – adding to the economic vitality of neighborhoods across Illinois.**

Prosecuting drug possession as a felony has resulted in tens of thousands of people from Waukegan to Cairo being limited in opportunities for employment, housing, and education. Our communities are stronger when everyone can participate.

- ✔ **Addresses racial inequities in our criminal legal system.**

While drug use is a reality in all communities, people of color—especially Black Illinoisans—are far more likely to be arrested, convicted, and incarcerated for possessing drugs. The result is that neighborhoods of color have been adversely impacted, with so many residents experiencing incarceration or the stigma of living with a felony record.

- ✔ **Shifts resources away from the failed strategy of arrest and incarceration and refocuses our resources on Illinoisans' real priorities.**

If we reclassify low-level drug possession as a misdemeanor and utilize public health resources, we can allow our criminal legal system to focus on reducing the violence that remains too high across Illinois, and free up resources currently wasted on imprisonment to help people access health services in the communities where they live.

Supporting Organizations

ACLU of Illinois	Communities United	National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health
Adler University	Drug Policy Alliance	
AIDS Foundation Chicago	Equity and Transformation (E.A.T.)	The Next Movement
Alliance for Safety and Justice	Fully Free Coalition	Committee of the Trinity
Americans for Prosperity-- Illinois	Health & Medicine Policy Research Group	United Church of Christ Prison Ministry
Board of Health for the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District	Heartland Alliance	Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (NIRCO)
BPI Chicago	Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice	Peace and Justice Solutions
Broken No More	Illinois Association for Behavioral Health	The Perfectly Flawed Foundation
Buddy's Purpose	Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Phoenix Center
Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Illinois Justice Project	The Porchlight Collective, SAP
Champaign County Sheriff's Office	Illinois Public Health Association	Revolution Workshop
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District	Illinois Public Health Institute	Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation	Illinois Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-IL)	Students for a Sensible Drug Policy
Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts	Illinois State Bar Association	Target Area Development Corporation
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	JOLT Harm Reduction	TASC, Inc.
Chicago Community Bond Fund	Lake County Sheriff's Office	The Kennedy Forum Illinois
Chicago Recovery Alliance	Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)	Thresholds
Chicago Urban League	Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender	Transforming Reentry Services f/k/a Men & Women in Prison Ministries
Clergy for a New Drug Policy	League of Women Voters of Illinois	Women's Justice Institute
Communities United	Live4Lali	Workers Center for Racial Justice
Cook County	Live Free Chicago	
Cook County Department of Public Health	Live Free Illinois	
Cook County Health		
Cook County State's Attorney		