

# SUPPORT HB 3447: REDUCING BARRIERS TO RECOVERY

House Bill 3447 would strengthen communities across Illinois by elevating a public health approach to reducing the harms associated with drug use, replacing the failed strategy of punishment and incarceration.

- HB 3447 reclassifies the penalty for possession of small amounts of drugs from a felony to a Class A misdemeanor, and offers real diversion in the form of behavioral health assessments and access to treatment for people who need it, rather than incarceration.
- A public health approach to drug use will have a real impact on lives in Illinois. From 2016 to 2018, 20,000 people in Illinois were convicted of felonies for possessing small amounts of drugs, and 7,500 were imprisoned.

## HB 3447 (Ammons-Slaughter-Cassidy) would:

- ✓ **Enable people arrested for low-level drug possession 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.**

The current system of prosecuting drug possession as a felony has resulted in thousands of people from Waukegan to Cairo being limited in opportunities for education and employment. Our communities are stronger when everyone can participate.

- ✓ **Address racial inequities in our criminal justice system.**

While drug use is a reality in all communities, data shows that Illinois residents of color are much more likely to be arrested and convicted of drug possession. 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.

- ✓ **Shift resources from the failed strategy of arrest and incarceration, and refocus our resources on Illinoisans' real priorities.**

If we reclassify low-level drug possession as a misdemeanor and utilize public health resources, we can allow police to spend more time focused 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.

**For more information, please contact:**

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## Supporting Organizations

<b>ACLU of Illinois</b>	<b>Heartland Alliance</b>
<b>AIDS Foundation Chicago</b>	<b>Illinois Association for Behavioral Health</b>
<b>Board of Health for the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District</b>	<b>Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA)</b>
<b>BPI Chicago</b>	<b>Illinois Justice Project</b>
<b>Buddy's Purpose</b>	<b>Illinois Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-IL)</b>
<b>Cabrini Green Legal Aid</b>	<b>Illinois State Bar Association</b>
<b>Champaign County Sheriff's Office</b>	<b>Lake County Sheriff's Office</b>
<b>Champaign-Urbana Public Health District</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)</b>
<b>Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts</b>	<b>Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender</b>
<b>Chicago Coalition for the Homeless</b>	<b>Live4Lali</b>
<b>Chicago Community Bond Fund</b>	<b>Perfectly Flawed Foundation</b>
<b>Chicago Recovery Alliance</b>	<b>Revolution Workshop</b>
<b>Chicago Urban League</b>	<b>Shriver Center on Poverty Law</b>
<b>Clergy for a New Drug Policy</b>	<b>Students for a Sensible Drug Policy</b>
<b>Communities United</b>	<b>Target Area Development Corporation</b>
<b>Cook County</b>	<b>TASC, Inc.</b>
<b>Cook County Health</b>	<b>The Kennedy Forum Illinois</b>
<b>Cook County Department of Public Health</b>	<b>Thresholds</b>
<b>Cook County State's Attorney</b>	<b>Transforming Reentry Services f/k/a Men &amp; Women In Prison Ministries</b>
<b>Communities United</b>	<b>Women's Justice Institute</b>
<b>Dusty Roads</b>	
<b>Health &amp; Medicine Policy Research Group</b>	