

From: [Lauren Bartel](#)
To: [Council Comment; Frey, Jacob \(he/him/his\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Ordinance on Drug Paraphernalia
Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 6:22:59 AM

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Dear Mayor Frey and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned community member regarding the proposed ordinance to remove local restrictions on drug paraphernalia, including in public spaces.

I strongly support public health approaches to addiction and believe in treating people with dignity and respect. However, I also believe that effective policy must balance compassion with accountability.

This ordinance would have outsized impacts on the poorest neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods currently struggling to regain footing post George Floyd, COVID, and Operation Metro Surge. It would further drive away shoppers, diners, homeowners and renters from these neighborhoods and put undue stress on business owners. We've already seen a loss of 2,000 jobs this year because of actions our federal government has taken. Let's use our resources to support the return of those businesses, and to support making our city welcoming and safe, while still providing resources to those struggling with drug addiction. There are many residents poised to decide whether they stay in Minneapolis or move to the suburbs, and I'd hazard a guess that most of them really want to stay in our wonderful city, but ordinances like this push out families and people with the financial means to leave. We need a long-term solution that works for everyone.

I urge you to consider a more balanced approach, one that supports access to treatment while maintaining the ability to intervene in situations where behavior is harming the broader community.

Compassion and accountability are not opposites. We need both to create meaningful, lasting change.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,
Lauren Bartel

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As Minnesota state legislators who serve on public safety committees and represent the people of Minneapolis, we write to urge the Minneapolis City Council to pass the Care Over Criminalization ordinance, which would decriminalize the possession of drug paraphernalia. We also respectfully call on Mayor Jacob Frey to sign this ordinance into law.

We share a strong commitment to supporting individuals affected by substance use and the communities in which they live. Advancing policies grounded in care, recovery, and public safety is essential to fulfilling that responsibility.

This ordinance would bring Minneapolis city code into alignment with Minnesota state law following bipartisan changes enacted in 2023. Under current law, possession of drug paraphernalia is no longer a criminal offense, even when it contains residual amounts of controlled substances. In addition, syringes and drug-checking tools used to test strength, effectiveness, or purity are no longer classified as paraphernalia.

Adopting the Care Over Criminalization ordinance would allow Minneapolis to repeal outdated and conflicting provisions while advancing a public health-centered approach to substance use. Evidence consistently shows that criminalizing drug paraphernalia increases barriers to treatment and recovery, while health-focused strategies improve outcomes, reduce harm, and strengthen community safety.

The Minnesota Legislature recognized this evidence when it acted to decriminalize drug paraphernalia, and the Governor signed those reforms into law. Aligning local policy with state law is a necessary and practical step toward implementing an evidence-based approach that moves beyond the ineffective, overly punitive strategies of the past.

We urge you to take this important step to support public health, enhance public safety, and ensure consistency in the law.


Sincerely,



Senate President Bobby Joe Champion
Senate District 59



Judiciary & Public Safety Vice Chair
Senator Clare Oumou Verbeten
Senate District 65



Senator Sandy Pappas
Senate District 65



Senator Zaynab Mohamed
Senate District 63



Senator Omar Fateh
Senate District 62



Senator Doron Clark
Senate District 60

Rep. Kelly Moller, HD 40A, Chair of Public Safety Finance and Policy

Rep. Aisha Gomez, HD 62A, Chair of Taxes

Rep. Kaela Berg, HD 55B, Public Safety Finance and Policy Member

Rep. Cedrick Frazier, HD 43A, Chair of Ways and Means

Rep. Athena Hollins, HD 66B, Public Safety Finance and Policy Member

Rep. Esther Agbaje, HD 59B, Vice Chair of Ways and Means

Rep. Sydney Jordan, HD 60A, Chair of Education Policy

Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura, HD 63A

Rep. Anquam Mahamoud, HD 62B

Public Comment

Row 7

Date Created	04/08/26 7:04 PM
Saved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name	Michael Billard
Issue/File	2026-00096
Comment	<p>I recently moved here from Portland, OR. As a resident there for multiple years, I witnessed first hand the impacts of decriminalizing drug use. It only exacerbated problems Portland was already having. I realize this is only about paraphernalia, but personally, I don't wanna step over needles in the street. As I did in Portland. I don't wanna raise my kids in a society that allows for that. This society is already allowing a lot of crime. Car jackings, murders, home invasions. This city has a lot to offer but it also has a lot to work on. We should be cleaning up the city, focusing on infrastructure and opportunities for disadvantaged groups. We should be focusing on increasing the safety of the city. Not inviting more chaos, more drug use, more littering, more homeless. Because people moved to Portland to be homeless and do drugs. There are many articles online about this sort of thing with direct interviews with people who've done that. Portland was an amazing city before Covid and legislation exactly like this. It's a slippery slope. I think there are much more important things to focus on. Instead of inviting more drug use. We don't live in isolation. People are free to migrate within this country. As they should be. It's a great part of being an American. Being able and free to migrate from ocean to ocean. More and more, Minnesota will become a safe haven in the coming decades. For people migrating due to climate and water scarcity. Cost of living, even. Minnesota and the twin cities have a great future in store if it makes the right decisions. If it's governed in a way that positively impacts its citizens. This legislation? Does not, absolutely does not benefit me. It doesn't benefit the average Minneapolis citizen going to work everyday and paying taxes. I'm not entirely sure who this benefits. Even drug users. So, who is profiting off this legislation? People involved in homeless services...maybe? This legislation isn't for the people. It's not for the benefit of this city. It will cost the residents of this city tax dollars and a loss of real estate value in commercial and residential sectors. I'll conclude by reiterating that a society only has the amount of crime that it allows for. I do not support this legislation and can't emphasize strongly enough the negative impact this will have in the coming years on this great city. Portland has already run this experiment, and has already changed laws to recriminalize drugs. We have a lot in common with Portland, much more so than Portugal. Who I imagine the author of this legislation cited.</p>
Ward	Ward 8
Meeting Type	City Council