



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB0143 Criminal Law - Marijuana - Possession and Possession With Intent to Distribute

POSITION: SUPPORT

DATE: January 14, 2021

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender supports SB0143, and respectfully requests that the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 143.

Senate Bill 143 would expand the amount of marijuana possession that is decriminalized in the State of Maryland, an effort that is increasingly supported and being legislated across the country. By 2021, fifteen states have completely legalized marijuana. A recent Gallup polling further demonstrates that 68% of Americans support marijuana legalization. While this bill does not provide full legalization of marijuana, it would increase the amount of marijuana an individual could possess without risking criminal penalty. Thus, this bill helps lead Maryland in a positive direction with necessary legislative reform on the decriminalization of marijuana possession.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 143.