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Maryland Senate Finance Committee
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Testimony from the Maryland State Chapter of the
National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML)

Support with Amendments: **Cannabis - Legalization and Regulation Act (SB0833)**

"If I can't grow my own cannabis, it's not actually legal."

Introduction

Maryland NORML has no paid staff – we are entirely energized by more than 5,000 Maryland citizens committed to ending marijuana prohibition and establishing a regulated cannabis commercial market for adults who choose to use marijuana responsibly. We submit this testimony on behalf of our membership, their families, and other Marylanders who want to see harm reduction policies that will establish a more just and inclusive society. I do not now and never have had any stake or investment of any kind in any cannabis enterprise, (nor does anyone in my family) and have never received any fee or remuneration for consulting with any cannabis enterprise.

1. Decriminalizing Home Cultivation

Once we repeal marijuana prohibition, an adult in Maryland will no longer face criminal charges for “personal use amounts” of cannabis. The “personal use amount” definition should include six cannabis plants with a twelve-plant limit per household, as reflected in SB0692. The law should protect people for keeping the cannabis produced by their legal personal use cultivation, provided the cannabis is kept at the location where it was cultivated and secure from unauthorized access. Our laws should not *require* citizens to purchase a product they are perfectly capable of producing for themselves.

When adult cannabis use is legal, it is inconceivable that there would be any penalty under law for growing a personal use amount for non-commercial purposes.

2. SB0833 must greatly expand the number of Tier I cultivation licenses during the initial round; the state should not prevent people from developing viable businesses.

Capping licenses results in the government picking winners and losers. Uncapped licenses for small, family owned-and-operated enterprises would give everyone a fair shot to compete in the free market, without causing over-supply problems associated

with massive industrial-sized production facilities. Many states, including New Jersey, do not cap small-business licenses. Allowing uncapped micro-grow licenses will also avoid furthering the unfair advantage associated with the existing growers and businesses in the legal market. Capping small business licenses allows existing vertically-integrated operators to squeeze out their competitors, including any new social equity applicants.

3. Increase legal possession amounts to four ounces to mirror the medical law.

Police should not arbitrate who can and cannot possess four ounces - we must harmonize the medical and adult-use market. Applying different possession levels places citizens under continued pressure associated with otherwise avoidable police encounters.

4. Delay current license holder entry into the adult-use market until new, family-owned and operated business are established.

The only way to assure broad-based economic participation is to provide aspiring business owners with legal access to the legal market.

For these reasons, we urge you to support SB0833 with amendments and forward with a favorable recommendation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Luke Jones, Maryland NORML