

Subject: Please Ban Marijuana Odor Stops

Dear Senator Waldstreicher:

As one of your constituents, I ask you to support Senate Bill 51 which would ban the use of marijuana odor as a reason for police to stop and search people in Maryland.

I was very happy to see the Maryland legislature support the legalization of adult recreational use of marijuana last year. Maryland voters then enthusiastically supported the legalization ballot measure this past fall. However, the tools of the racist “war on drugs” still remain and need to be dismantled. One of these tools is the ability of police officers to use the real or perceived odor of marijuana to justify stops and searches.

Right now, police are allowed to stop an individual or search their vehicle based on the odor of marijuana alone. Police encounters that begin based on the odor of marijuana undermine the right to privacy, and it also enables racial profiling that has been proven to be a serious issue in policing.

Since recreational marijuana use is now legal, it only makes sense to limit the use of the odor of marijuana as a pretext for police stops. Marylanders should not be afraid that police will stop them because of the lingering odor of a now-legal substance.

With your support of Senate Bill 51, we can ensure that we get marijuana legalization right in Maryland, and limit racist police interactions as much as possible.

Sincerely,

Elissa Laitin
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