

To: Senator Karen Lewis-Young

Subject: Please Ban Odor Stops & Searches & Promote Racial Justice!

Dear Senator Lewis-Young

My name is William Reid, and I am one of your constituents.

While the Maryland legislature finally moved to legalize adult recreational use of marijuana last year and voters enthusiastically supported the measure this past fall, the legacy, and tools of the intentionally racist

“War on Drugs” remains. One of these tools is the ability of officers to use the actual or perceived odor of marijuana to justify stops and searches.

The current legal standards allow police to stop an individual or search their vehicle based on the odor of marijuana alone. Police encounters that begin based on the scent of marijuana undermine the right to privacy and enable racial profiling. It is the logical and necessary extension of the legislature’s work in 2022 to legalize recreational marijuana use to limit the use of the odor of marijuana in police encounters in the 2023 legislative session. Marylanders should not fear police interactions because of the lingering aroma of a now-legal substance.

Thank you for your leadership and willingness to make a bold change that meets the moment we are in! With your support of Senate Bill 51, I know we can ensure that we get legalization right in Maryland and protect Marylanders from unnecessary police interactions and violations of their rights.

Sincerely,
William Reid