



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0051**  
**Criminal Procedure - Reasonable Suspicion and Probable Cause - Cannabis**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Carter  
**Committee:** Judiciary Proceedings  
**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition  
**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0051 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

After decades of proof of the economic and racial harm deliberately caused by marijuana criminalization, Marylanders and their legislators have successfully made strides to legalize its consumption. But there are still dangerous loopholes left that can be used to perpetuate the "war on drugs", which is really, as the data has made clear for over half a century, a war on Black and brown people. One of the more egregious loopholes is the police having the power to conduct traffic stops and searches based solely on their belief that they smelled marijuana.

The smell of marijuana is not something that can be categorically proven, thus it is not a solid basis for the police to stop and search an individual. It is an excuse that is routinely used to infringe on privacy which in turn further perpetuates racial profiling. In Maryland, police stop Black drivers more frequently than any other race, and probable cause to search is used to justify 67% of searches. THIS IS ABHORRENT AND UNACCEPTABLE.

Marijuana odor has been used as a loophole to justify racial profiling for far too long. As we look forward to legalization, this body must ensure that the smell, or perception of a smell, of a soon-to-be legal substance, without any other behavior, cannot be used to justify a stop and search.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.