



Maryland Business & Clergy Partnership

www.BusinessClergyPartnership.com; Maryland.bcp@gmail.com

**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Thursday, February 2nd, 2023
SB 51 - Criminal Procedure – Reasonable Suspicion and
Probable Cause - Cannabis
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and committee members,

My name is Lisa Ellis, I am a Marylander, an advocate, and an Executive Board Member of the Maryland Business Clergy Partnership. MBCP is a bipartisan organization with a mission to bridge the gaps between businesses, faith-based communities, elected officials and governments. Our goal is to make a difference in every community throughout Maryland by changing the political climate through policy and advocacy to open up doors for all.

MBCP has led numerous successful campaigns that have produced real change throughout the state. We feel strongly about partnering with businesses, organizations, and activists that are committed to help producing change from within. That is why I am here today to express our support for Senate Bill 51.

After decades of proof of the economic and racial harm deliberately caused by cannabis 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, Brown, and working-class 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 cannabis.

Cannabis 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.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 51.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ellis, Executive Board Member
Maryland Business Clergy Partnership