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Education, Energy, and
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Executive Nominations Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Finance Committee

SB 299 – Cannabis Agents – Registration – Security Guards
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and members of the distinguished Senate Finance Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 299 – Cannabis Agents – Registration – Security Guards. This legislation would eliminate an unnecessary redundancy in statute which currently requires those in the security guard industry to submit fingerprints or a national criminal history records check to the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) even if they already are certified by the Maryland State Police (MSP).

This redundancy of both MSP and MCA regulating the security guard industry was originally brought to my attention by Evan Avnet, the President of the Maryland Investigators and Security Association (MISA), who operates Tactical American Security Consulting (USTASC) in Salisbury. He brought several issues to my attention, including:

- 1) The security guard industry is the only profession in Maryland regulated by two different Maryland entities (MSP and MCA) to perform the same function;
- 2) MCA requires a security plan, including emergency protocol, be submitted as part of the completed registration form, with no indication of how the security plan would be reviewed or safeguarded; and
- 3) MCA requires fingerprinting and criminal history records check be submitted, which are already submitted to MSP.

Through extensive conversations throughout the Interim with the MCA, Senator Feldman, and President Avnet, we identified that the third concern – the fingerprint and background checks – must be addressed with a statutory change, resulting in the legislation before you. Should SB 299 be implemented, MCA would use proof of MSP security guard certification to verify that the prospective agent is eligible to work on the premises of a cannabis licensee or registrant.

I, along with President Avnet, will continue to work with the MCA to address the remaining concerns through the regulatory process. The MCA has already suggested regulatory changes to remove the emergency plan requirement, and the public comment period for those changes ended on January 27th, 2025.

As many of you know, following the passage of Question 4 during the 2022 elections, the Maryland General Assembly was required to establish the statutory framework for a legal cannabis industry in Maryland. The Maryland General Assembly passed and Governor Moore signed the Cannabis Reform Act of 2023 (Chapters 254/255 of 2023) into law, which required all cannabis agents to submit fingerprints to the MCA.

Under SB 299, a security guard would still register with MCA as a cannabis agent; however, it eliminates an unnecessary redundancy for the security guard to submit fingerprints for both MCA agent registration and MSP certification.

The Maryland Cannabis Administration supports SB 299.

When any new industry is created, unforeseen issues are identified within the first few years of implementation that must be addressed to remove unnecessary burdens and for the industry to work effectively. This requirement for MCA to gather fingerprints and criminal history checks is an unnecessary burden on both the security guard industry and MCA.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable and very swift report on SB 299.