

HOUSE BILL 280

E1

3lr1004
CF SB 73

By: **Delegates Davis, Crutchfield, Foley, Lopez, Patterson, Ruth, Simpson, and Toles**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2023

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Cannabis–Related Offenses – Civil Penalties**

3 FOR the purpose of substituting civil penalties in place of criminal penalties for certain
4 offenses relating to possessing, possessing with the intent to distribute, and
5 cultivating cannabis and manufacturing cannabis products; and generally relating
6 to cannabis–related offenses.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

8 Article – Criminal Law

9 Section 5–101(a) and (u) and 5–601(a)

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

12 (As enacted by Chapter 26 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022)

13 BY repealing

14 Article – Criminal Law

15 Section 5–101(e–2)

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

18 (As enacted by Chapter 26 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

20 Article – Criminal Law

21 Section 5–601(c)(2) and (d), 5–601.2, and 5–602

22 Annotated Code of Maryland

23 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

24 (As enacted by Chapter 26 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022)

25 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

26 Article – Criminal Law

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Section 5–601.1 and 5–607
2 Annotated Code of Maryland
3 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

4 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
5 Article – Criminal Law
6 Section 5–603
7 Annotated Code of Maryland
8 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

9 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
10 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

11 **Article – Criminal Law**

12 5–101.

13 (a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

14 [(e–2) “Civil use amount” means:

15 (1) an amount of usable cannabis that exceeds 1.5 ounces but does not
16 exceed 2.5 ounces;

17 (2) an amount of concentrated cannabis that exceeds 12 grams but does not
18 exceed 20 grams; or

19 (3) an amount of cannabis products containing
20 delta–9–tetrahydrocannabinol that exceeds 750 milligrams but does not exceed 1,250
21 milligrams.]

22 (u) “Personal use amount” means:

23 (1) an amount of usable cannabis that does not exceed 1.5 ounces;

24 (2) an amount of concentrated cannabis that does not exceed 12 grams;

25 (3) an amount of cannabis products containing
26 delta–9–tetrahydrocannabinol that does not exceed 750 milligrams; or

27 (4) two or fewer cannabis plants.

28 5–601.

29 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not:

30 (1) possess or administer to another a controlled dangerous substance,

1 unless:

2 (i) obtained directly or by prescription or order from an authorized
3 provider acting in the course of professional practice; or

4 (ii) the controlled dangerous substance is cannabis, the individual is
5 at least 21 years old, and the amount possessed is the personal use amount; or

6 (2) obtain or attempt to obtain a controlled dangerous substance, or
7 procure or attempt to procure the administration of a controlled dangerous substance by:

8 (i) fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or subterfuge;

9 (ii) the counterfeiting or alteration of a prescription or a written
10 order;

11 (iii) the concealment of a material fact;

12 (iv) the use of a false name or address;

13 (v) falsely assuming the title of or representing to be a
14 manufacturer, distributor, or authorized provider; or

15 (vi) making, issuing, or presenting a false or counterfeit prescription
16 or written order.

17 (c) (2) (i) [Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, a
18 person whose violation of this section involves the use or possession of cannabis is guilty of
19 a misdemeanor of possession of cannabis and is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 6
20 months or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.]

21 **1. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS TITLE, A**
22 **FINDING OF GUILT UNDER THIS SECTION INVOLVING THE USE OR POSSESSION OF AN**
23 **AMOUNT OF CANNABIS EXCEEDING THE PERSONAL USE AMOUNT IS A CIVIL OFFENSE**
24 **PUNISHABLE BY A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$250.**

25 **2. A PERSON WHO IS FOUND GUILTY OF A CIVIL OFFENSE**
26 **INVOLVING THE USE OR POSSESSION OF AN AMOUNT OF CANNABIS EXCEEDING THE**
27 **PERSONAL USE AMOUNT MAY REQUEST, AND SHALL BE GRANTED, A PENALTY OF UP**
28 **TO 75 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE IN LIEU OF A FINE.**

29 (ii) 1. A finding of guilt under this section involving the use or
30 possession of the personal use amount of cannabis by a person under the age of 21 years is
31 a civil offense punishable by a fine not exceeding \$100.

32 2. [A finding of guilt under this section involving the use or

1 possession of the civil use amount of cannabis is a civil offense punishable by a fine not
2 exceeding \$250.

3 3.] A. In addition to a fine, a court may order a person under the
4 age of 21 years who [commits a violation punishable under subparagraph 1 or 2 of this
5 subparagraph] **IS FOUND GUILTY OF POSSESSION OF CANNABIS** to attend a drug
6 education program approved by the Maryland Department of Health, refer the person to
7 an assessment for substance abuse disorder, and refer the person to substance abuse
8 treatment, if necessary.

9 B. A court that orders a person to a drug education program
10 or substance abuse assessment or treatment under this subparagraph may hold the
11 case sub curia pending receipt of proof of completion of the program, assessment, or
12 treatment.

13 (d) The provisions of subsection [(c)(2)(ii)] **(C)(2)** of this section may not be
14 construed to affect the laws relating to:

15 (1) operating a vehicle or vessel while under the influence of or while
16 impaired by a controlled dangerous substance; or

17 (2) seizure and forfeiture.

18 5-601.1.

19 (a) **IN THIS SECTION, "CIVIL CANNABIS VIOLATION" MEANS A VIOLATION**
20 **OF:**

21 (1) **§ 5-601 OF THIS PART INVOLVING THE USE OR POSSESSION OF**
22 **CANNABIS;**

23 (2) **§ 5-601.2 OF THIS PART;**

24 (3) **§ 5-602(B)(1) OF THIS PART; OR**

25 (4) **§ 5-603(B) OF THIS PART.**

26 **(B)** A police officer shall issue a citation to a person who the police officer has
27 probable cause to believe has committed a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5-601 of this
28 part involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
29 amount of cannabis].

30 **[(b)] (C)** (1) A **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5-601 of this part involving
31 the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use amount of
32 cannabis] is a civil offense.

1 (2) Adjudication of a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [under § 5–601 of this part
2 involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
3 amount of cannabis]:

4 (i) is not a criminal conviction for any purpose; and

5 (ii) does not impose any of the civil disabilities that may result from
6 a criminal conviction.

7 **[(c)] (D)** (1) A citation issued for a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5–601 of
8 this part involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal
9 use amount of cannabis] shall be signed by the police officer who issues the citation and
10 shall contain:

11 (i) the name, address, and date of birth of the person charged;

12 (ii) the date and time that the violation occurred;

13 (iii) the location at which the violation occurred;

14 (iv) the fine that may be imposed, **AND, IF APPLICABLE, THAT**
15 **COMMUNITY SERVICE MAY BE REQUESTED IN LIEU OF A FINE;**

16 (v) a notice stating that prepayment of the fine is allowed, except as
17 provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection; and

18 (vi) a notice in boldface type that states that the person shall:

19 1. pay the full amount of the preset fine; or

20 2. request a trial date at the date, time, and place established
21 by the District Court by writ or trial notice.

22 (2) If a citation for a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5–601 of this part
23 involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
24 amount of cannabis] is issued to a person under the age of 21 years, the court shall summon
25 the person for trial.

26 **[(d)] (E)** The form of the citation shall be uniform throughout the State and shall
27 be prescribed by the District Court.

28 **[(e)] (F)** (1) The Chief Judge of the District Court shall establish a schedule
29 for the prepayment of the fine.

30 (2) Prepayment of a fine shall be considered a plea of guilty to a Code

1 violation.

2 (3) A person described in subsection [(c)(2)] **(D)(2)** of this section may not
3 prepay the fine.

4 [(f)] **(G)** (1) A person may request **COMMUNITY SERVICE, IF APPLICABLE,**
5 **OR** a trial by sending a request for trial to the District Court in the jurisdiction where the
6 citation was issued within 30 days of the issuance of the citation.

7 (2) If a person other than a person described in subsection [(c)(2)] **(D)(2)**
8 of this section does not request **COMMUNITY SERVICE OR** a trial or prepay the fine within
9 30 days of the issuance of the citation, the court may impose the maximum fine and costs
10 against the person and find the person is guilty of a Code violation.

11 [(g)] **(H)** The issuing jurisdiction shall forward a copy of the citation and a
12 request for trial to the District Court in the district having venue.

13 [(h)] **(I)** (1) The failure of a defendant to respond to a summons described in
14 subsection [(c)(2)] **(D)(2)** of this section shall be governed by § 5–212 of the Criminal
15 Procedure Article.

16 (2) If a person [at least 21 years old] **OTHER THAN A PERSON DESCRIBED**
17 **IN SUBSECTION (D)(2) OF THIS SECTION** fails to appear after having requested
18 **COMMUNITY SERVICE OR** a trial, the court may impose the maximum fine and costs
19 against the person and find the person is guilty of a Code violation.

20 [(i)] **(J)** In any proceeding for a Code violation [under § 5–601 of this part
21 involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
22 amount of cannabis] **FOR A CIVIL CANNABIS VIOLATION:**

23 (1) the State has the burden to prove the guilt of the defendant by a
24 preponderance of the evidence;

25 (2) the court shall apply the evidentiary standards as prescribed by law or
26 rule for the trial of a criminal case;

27 (3) the court shall ensure that the defendant has received a copy of the
28 charges against the defendant and that the defendant understands those charges;

29 (4) the defendant is entitled to cross-examine all witnesses who appear
30 against the defendant, to produce evidence or witnesses on behalf of the defendant, and to
31 testify on the defendant's own behalf, if the defendant chooses to do so;

32 (5) the defendant is entitled to be represented by counsel of the defendant's
33 choice and at the expense of the defendant; and

1 (6) the defendant may enter a plea of guilty or not guilty, and the verdict
2 of the court in the case shall be:

3 (i) guilty of a Code violation;

4 (ii) not guilty of a Code violation; or

5 (iii) probation before judgment, imposed by the court in the same
6 manner and to the same extent as is allowed by law in the trial of a criminal case.

7 ~~[(j)]~~ **(K)** (1) The defendant is liable for the costs of the proceedings in the
8 District Court.

9 (2) The court costs in a Code violation case [under § 5–601 of this part
10 involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
11 amount of cannabis] **FOR A CIVIL CANNABIS VIOLATION** in which costs are imposed are
12 \$5.

13 ~~[(k)]~~ **(L)** (1) The State’s Attorney for any county may prosecute a Code
14 violation [under § 5–601 of this part involving the use or possession of the civil use amount
15 of cannabis or the personal use amount of cannabis] **FOR A CIVIL CANNABIS VIOLATION**
16 in the same manner as prosecution of a violation of the criminal laws of the State.

17 (2) In a Code violation case [under § 5–601 of this part involving the use or
18 possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use amount of cannabis] **FOR**
19 **A CIVIL CANNABIS VIOLATION**, the State’s Attorney may:

20 (i) enter a nolle prosequi or move to place the case on the stet docket;
21 and

22 (ii) exercise authority in the same manner as prescribed by law for
23 violation of the criminal laws of the State.

24 ~~[(l)]~~ **(M)** A person issued a citation for a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5–601
25 of this part involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the
26 personal use amount of cannabis] who is under the age of 18 years shall be subject to the
27 procedures and dispositions provided in Title 3, Subtitle 8A of the Courts Article.

28 ~~[(m)]~~ **(N)** A citation for a **CIVIL CANNABIS** violation [of § 5–601 of this part
29 involving the use or possession of the civil use amount of cannabis or the personal use
30 amount of cannabis] and the official record of a court regarding the citation are not subject
31 to public inspection and may not be included on the public website maintained by the
32 Maryland Judiciary if:

33 (1) the defendant has prepaid the fine;

1 (2) the defendant has pled guilty to or been found guilty of the Code
2 violation and has fully paid the fine and costs imposed **OR COMPLETED THE COMMUNITY**
3 **SERVICE IMPOSED** for the violation;

4 (3) the defendant has received a probation before judgment and has fully
5 paid the fine and completed any terms imposed by the court;

6 (4) the case has been removed from the stet docket after the defendant fully
7 paid the fine and completed any terms imposed by the court;

8 (5) the State has entered a nolle prosequi;

9 (6) the defendant has been found not guilty of the charge; or

10 (7) the charge has been dismissed.

11 5-601.2.

12 (a) A person may not cultivate cannabis plants in a manner that is contrary to
13 this section.

14 (b) Cannabis plants may not be cultivated in a location where the plants are
15 subject to public view, including a view from another private property, without the use of
16 binoculars, aircraft, or other optical aids.

17 (c) (1) In this subsection, “reasonable precautions” includes cultivating
18 cannabis in an enclosed locked space to which persons under the age of 21 years do not
19 possess a key.

20 (2) A person who cultivates cannabis shall take reasonable precautions to
21 ensure the plants are secure from unauthorized access and access by a person under the
22 age of 21 years.

23 (d) Cannabis cultivation may occur only on property lawfully in possession of the
24 cultivator or with the consent of the person in lawful possession of the property.

25 (e) A person under the age of 21 years may not cultivate cannabis plants.

26 (f) (1) A person may not cultivate more than two cannabis plants.

27 (2) If two or more persons at least 21 years old reside at the same residence,
28 no more than two cannabis plants may be cultivated at that residence.

29 (g) A person who violates this section is guilty of a [misdemeanor and on
30 conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 3 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000
31 or both] **CIVIL OFFENSE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000.**

1 5-602.

2 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not:

3 (1) distribute or dispense a controlled dangerous substance; or

4 (2) possess a controlled dangerous substance other than cannabis in
5 sufficient quantity reasonably to indicate under all circumstances an intent to distribute or
6 dispense a controlled dangerous substance.

7 (b) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not possess
8 cannabis in sufficient quantity reasonably to indicate under all circumstances an intent to
9 distribute or dispense cannabis.

10 (2) Possession of [the civil use amount of cannabis or] the personal use
11 amount of cannabis without other evidence of an intent to distribute or dispense does not
12 constitute a violation of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

13 (c) (1) (i) In this subsection, “adult sharing” means transferring cannabis
14 between persons who are 21 years of age or older without remuneration.

15 (ii) “Adult sharing” does not include instances in which:

16 1. cannabis is given away contemporaneously with another
17 reciprocal transaction between the same parties;

18 2. a gift of cannabis is offered or advertised in conjunction
19 with an offer for the sale of goods or services; or

20 3. a gift of cannabis is contingent on a separate reciprocal
21 transaction for goods or services.

22 (2) This section does not prohibit, and no civil or criminal penalty may be
23 imposed for, adult sharing of the personal use amount of cannabis.

24 5-603.

25 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not manufacture a
26 controlled dangerous substance other than cannabis, or manufacture, distribute, or possess
27 a machine, equipment, instrument, implement, device, or a combination of them that is
28 adapted to produce a controlled dangerous substance other than cannabis under
29 circumstances that reasonably indicate an intent to use it to produce, sell, or dispense a
30 controlled dangerous substance other than cannabis in violation of this title.

31 (b) Except as otherwise provided in this title, a person may not cultivate or grow
32 cannabis or manufacture a cannabis product, or manufacture, distribute, or possess a
33 machine, equipment, an instrument, an implement, a device, or a combination of them that

1 is adapted to produce cannabis or a cannabis product under circumstances that reasonably
2 indicate an intent to use it to produce, sell, or dispense cannabis or a cannabis product in
3 violation of this title.

4 5–607.

5 (a) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection and §§ 5–608 and
6 5–609 of this subtitle, a person who violates a provision of §§ 5–602 through 5–606 of this
7 subtitle is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5
8 years or a fine not exceeding \$15,000 or both.

9 (2) (I) A person who violates § 5–602(b)(1) or § 5–603(b) of this subtitle
10 is guilty of a [misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 3
11 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both] **CIVIL OFFENSE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE**
12 **NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000.**

13 (II) **A PERSON WHO IS FOUND GUILTY OF A CIVIL OFFENSE**
14 **UNDER THIS SECTION MAY REQUEST, AND SHALL BE GRANTED, A PENALTY OF UP TO**
15 **500 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE IN LIEU OF A FINE.**

16 (b) A person convicted under this section is not prohibited from participating in a
17 drug treatment program under § 8–507 of the Health – General Article because of the
18 length of the sentence.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
20 October 1, 2023, contingent on the taking effect of Section 4 of Chapter 26 of the Acts of the
21 General Assembly of 2022, and if Section 4 of Chapter 26 does not become effective, this
22 Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be null and void.