



House Judiciary Committee

February 11, 2020

House Bill 550

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 550 to decriminalize the possession of up to one ounce of cannabis for personal use. The bill more importantly prohibits a person who possesses up to an ounce of cannabis from being charged with possession with intent to distribute (PWID).

Maryland made the policy decision in 2014 to decriminalize the possession of personal use amounts of cannabis. Unfortunately, people are still sometimes arrested and charged for PWID for the simple act of sharing their cannabis, even when under the current 10 gram limit.

The collateral damage caused by the war on drugs continues to harm people in Maryland, and disproportionately people of color. As this committee has heard repeatedly over the years, people with criminal records are too often denied employment, housing, food stamps, and scholarships, without any due consideration of the details involved in the records.

We must focus our resources on education, prevention, and health interventions when it comes to the use drugs and addictions. We urge a favorable report on HB 550.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.