



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342  
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO, CHAIR  
JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK, VICE-CHAIR  
GABRIEL ACEVERO, TREASURER  
JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY  
CESIAH FUENTES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### MEMBERS

ALFRED CARR  
ALONZO WASHINGTON  
ANNE HEALEY  
ARIANA B. KELLY  
BEN BARNES  
BENJAMIN KRAMER  
BONNIE CULLISON  
BROOKE LIERMAN  
CAROL L. KRIMM  
CHARLOTTE CRUTCHFIELD  
CHERYL KAGAN  
CRAIG ZUCKER  
DAVID MOON  
DIANA FENNEL  
EMILY SHETTY  
EREK BARRON  
ERIC LUEDTKE  
GERALDINE VALENTINO-SMITH  
GUY GUZZONE  
HEATHER BAGNALL  
J. SANDY BARTLETT  
JAMES ROSAPEPE  
JARED SOLOMON  
JAZZ LEWIS  
JEFF WALDSTREICHER  
JEN TERRASA  
JESSICA FELDMARK  
JHEANELLE WILKINS  
JILL P. CARTER  
JIM GILCHRIST  
JULIAN IVEY  
JULIE PALAKOVICH CARR  
KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
KEN KERR  
LESLEY LOPEZ  
LILY QI  
LISA BELCASTRO  
LORIG CHARKOUDIAN  
MAGGIE MCINTOSH  
MALCOLM AUGUSTINE  
MARC KORMAN  
MARY A. LEHMAN  
MARY WASHINGTON  
MELISSA WELLS  
MIKE ROGERS  
NICOLE WILLIAMS  
PAMELA BEIDLE  
PAMELA QUEEN  
REGINA T. BOYCE  
ROBBYN LEWIS  
SHANE PENDERGRASS  
SHANEKA HENSON  
SHEILA RUTH  
SHELLY HETTLEMAN  
STEPHANIE SMITH  
SUSAN C. LEE  
TERRI HILL  
VAUGHN STEWART  
WANIKA FISHER  
WILL SMITH

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: January 18, 2021

RE: HB324 Criminal Law - Marijuana - Possession and Possession With Intent to Distribute

### **The MLLC supports HB324 Criminal Law - Marijuana - Possession and Possession With Intent to Distribute.**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation which improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a voice in the development of public policy affecting the Latino community and the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB324.

Maryland has taken appropriate strides in correcting the wrongs of drug-related mass incarceration against people of color. In 2014, the Maryland General Assembly decriminalized possession of up to 10 grams of marijuana. It is now measured as a civil offense that carries a \$100 fine. It was good step to begin marijuana possession reform, but more can be done.

Despite our state's decriminalization efforts, 2018 data reports that Black Marylanders are [twice](#) as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession as white Marylanders. A similar trend is seen in [Baltimore](#) where Black residents are disproportionately arrested. This hyper-policing of low-level marijuana severely hurts our communities of color, including Latino and immigrant families. Convictions of these arrests damage employment and education opportunities, and housing stability. These individuals should not bear this burden for small amounts when there is a growing majority that supports [legalization](#).

HB324 increases the threshold for the civil offense of possession of marijuana from less than 10 grams to less than one ounce. Maryland has among the smallest amounts of decriminalization in the nation, where most states have decriminalized one ounce. Now, is the time to right another wrong.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB324.