



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 32 – Cannabis – Legalization and Regulation
(Inclusion, Restoration, and Rehabilitation Act of 2021)
House Judiciary Committee
February 16, 2021**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 32 – Cannabis – Legalization and Regulation (Inclusion, Restoration, and Rehabilitation Act of 2021). My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have changed their laws to legalize or decriminalize cannabis for recreational use. With each passing year, more states are moving in this trend, and it is time for Maryland to join their ranks. HB 32 sets us on the pathway to legalize cannabis, in small amounts for personal use, while restoring the rights of those previously convicted of personal possession through automatic expungement of criminal records. Legalization and regulation of cannabis will reduce the stress on our criminal justice system, allowing for more resources to be used to prevent and mitigate serious crimes. It will provide much needed revenues to the state to meet the needs of Maryland's residents. Most importantly, providing justice to those who have been convicted in the past, is morally imperative.

With legalization and regulation of a brand new industry, businesses will fill the market need for cannabis products, bringing new jobs to fulfill demand. It is imperative that, whenever we have the opportunity to create new jobs, that we ensure workers have a voice in that process. Those who create the entirety of the value of any business should have a say in their own future. Therefore, we support the following friendly amendment to HB 32, offered by the sponsor, that will provide the workers in this new industry a level playing field by which they can exercise their rights in the workplace:

1) On p. 50, after line 25, please insert:

4. Require all applicants for a dual license that have 10 or more employees to submit an attestation signed by a bona fide labor organization stating that the applicant has entered into a labor peace agreement with such bona fide labor organization.

2) On p. 58, after line 11, please insert:

(F) No later than 200 days after hiring a 10th employee, each cannabis establishment licensee shall submit an attestation signed by a bona fide labor organization stating that the applicant has entered into a labor peace agreement with such bona fide labor organization

(G) The maintenance of a labor peace agreement with a bona fide labor organization shall be an ongoing material condition of maintaining a cannabis establishment license with 10 or more employees beginning 200 days after the cannabis establishment hires its 10th employee.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB 32 with the above proposed friendly amendment.