



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0032
CANNABIS LEGALIZATION (INCLUSION, RESTORATION, AND REHABILITATION
ACT OF 2021**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lewis

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0032 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The youth of this state, like the youth of most states and countries around the world, experiments with controlled substances. This process is something that legislation, criminality, and teaching cannot seem to change. Our sons and daughters, and in most cases we, ourselves, have experimented with cannabis. And yet, for many of our young people, a criminal record often starts with a small amount of cannabis.

How hard is it to get a job with a criminal record? How much extra struggle in a person's life is it worth?

Our members believe that we need to stop arresting our youth for doing just what many of us did when we were young. Small amounts of cannabis should be legalized.

This bill would legalize personal possession (less than 2 ounces of non-concentrated cannabis or less than 15 grams of concentrated cannabis) and allow home cultivation of cannabis for adults. It will also automatically expunge past cannabis offenses, establish a social equity program to ensure inclusion in the industry from disproportionately impacted communities, and reinvest a significant portion of tax revenue into endowments to Maryland's four HBCUs and communities hardest hit by the war on drugs.

This makes sense. It's important to our members that we stop the war on our youth and throw our efforts into stopping more violent crimes.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.