



MARYLAND
Chamber of Commerce

LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Unfavorable

House Bill 614

Workers' Compensation – Medical Cannabis – Compensation and Benefits

House Economic Matters Committee

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Dear Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 5,500 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

This legislation negatively impacts Maryland's employers' ability to enforce a drug-free workforce *regardless of industry, occupation or trade* by allowing coverage for workers compensation claims even where *the sole* cause of the injury or disease is the injured workers' use of medical cannabis, as long as it was taken with written certification by a certifying provider. This provision disregards the real dangers that many workers face while at work with heavy equipment, in traffic or working at heights, for example. In order for Maryland employers to keep these people safe they need to be able to enforce drug-free workforce policies. The denial of workers compensation claims where the sole cause is the injured workers' use of medical cannabis, as with any other drugs or substances listed in the statute, acts as a deterrent and supports employers' safety policies.

Moreover, adding medical cannabis to the statute as an enumerated substance or treatment which employers must provide injured workers exposes all Maryland employers to federal criminal statutes especially those employers who practice interstate travel or who work on federal contracts. Those with drug-free workforce policies could be forced to cover lost time benefits while the injured worker uses medical cannabis without end or be forced to lose the ability to enforce their safety policies in any real sense.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce greatly respects the intent of this legislation; however, we respectfully request an **unfavorable report** on House Bill 614.

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60 West Street, Suite 100, Annapolis 21401 | 410-269-0642