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### **POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**BILL:** HB 0001 - Constitutional Amendment - Cannabis - Adult Use and Possession  
**FROM:** Maryland Office of the Public Defender  
**POSITION:** Favorable  
**DATE:** March 23, 2022

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender strongly supports Cannabis Legalization and supports the efforts made by HB 0001 to bring legalization to Maryland.

Marijuana legalization is an important step in righting the wrongs caused by the War on Drugs and over-policing in communities of color. Legalizing cannabis is critical to stop the use of it as a tool to disenfranchise communities of color. The disproportionate targeting of minority community members and communities by the War of Drugs has not only caused a loss of family structure and loss of income to many Maryland families, but it also disrupts entire communities.

MOPD encourages a path to legalization that provides for expungement opportunities and releases for past cannabis offenses. These steps are necessary to create some level of retribution for incarcerated citizens and restoring some of the imbalances caused by the War on Drugs.

For these reasons, the Office of the Public Defender urges a favorable report on HB 0001.

**Submitted by: Government Relations Division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender.**