



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 1 – Constitutional Amendment – Cannabis – Adult Use and Possession Senate Finance Committee March 23, 2022

SUPPORT

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

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1 – Constitutional Amendment – Cannabis – Adult Use and Possession. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 340,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have changed their laws to legalize or decriminalize cannabis for recreational use. In 2021, alone, five states moved legislation to legalize cannabis for recreational use. With each passing year, more states are legalizing, and it is time for Maryland to decide our future and determine if we will move forward on legalization.

HB 1 lets the voters of Maryland decide – for ourselves – at the ballot box this coming November, whether we shall join the ranks of the other 18 states, or if we will continue to criminalize cannabis use at the State level.

The position of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO is to support the legalization of cannabis. We believe that doing so will reduce the stress on our criminal justice system, allowing for more resources to be used to prevent and mitigate serious crimes. We also know that it will provide much needed revenues to the state to meet the needs of Maryland's residents.

However, regardless of labor's support for legalization, it should be up to the voters to decide whether or not we move forward. It is time to put the legalization of cannabis on the ballot and give Marylanders the choice.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on HB 1.