



Working to Reform Marijuana Laws

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## **Maryland (2022): SB 772, Testimony in support of parental protections for the lawful consumption of cannabis**

My name is Jax James and I serve as the State Policy Manager for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). I would like to thank the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee for considering SB 772. NORML is supportive of legislative efforts to protect cannabis/marijuana consumers from unjust discrimination.

SB 772 seeks to provide parental protections for those who lawfully consume cannabis. The bill provides that the use of marijuana by a parent or guardian does not qualify as neglect, except under additional specific circumstances.

Current state law allows registered qualifying patients to use medical cannabis for their respective health conditions. Cannabis, regardless of whether it is consumed for recreational or medical purposes, should not be considered as grounds for child neglect. Studies have [found](#) that cannabis exposure, even among young people, is not independently associated with significant, long-term changes in brain morphology. There is no clinical evidence to suggest that cannabis use impacts one's ability to take care of a child, therefore its use should in no case be considered grounds for child neglect.

Parents—and subsequently their children—should not be unjustly punished for their lawful consumption of cannabis, especially considering how socially accepted the lawful consumption of alcohol or prescribed medications by parents is, both substances that also cause impairment. If the consumption of cannabis does not cause a parent to harm or neglect their child, then no penalization should occur.

NORML urges Maryland lawmakers to thoughtfully consider and pass SB 772 to ensure that parents are not wrongfully discriminated against for their consumption of a legal plant.

