



Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 614:

Criminal Law - Controlled Dangerous Substances - Schedules - Adjustment

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Caleb Jasso, Policy Advocate

DATE: February 23, 2022

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-skill, low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. JOTF supports **Senate Bill 614** because it will allow for the Maryland Legislature to update and adjust controlled dangerous substances (CDS) with greater frequency and in a more streamlined process.

Under the Maryland Controlled Dangerous Substances Act, if the federal government places a substance on Schedules I through V, it is automatically considered a substance on the same schedule under Maryland law unless MDH objects to the designation. Although this process is automatic, currently, Maryland Department of Health, MDH is only able to update what is listed on schedules once per year, which poses potential scheduling issues. Additionally, this puts the state of Maryland behind and provides for the opportunity for drugs scheduled at a certain level to remain as they are even if the federal government de-schedules the drug. This can create unnecessary confusion and frustration for residents of Maryland who may be experiencing detrimental health problems made more bearable by a drug de-scheduled at the federal level and not at the state level.

An essential part of **Senate Bill 614**, is that Maryland does not lose the ability to reject or expand what is listed on drug schedules. The state retains the ability to remain semi-autonomous in this manner but is simply able to address the changes more quickly. Furthermore, MDH can object to federal government action immediately for drug scheduling, and therefore Maryland could act separately from the federal government. It should be noted that the bill also removes from statute those substances that Maryland regulates more stringently than the federal government. It does not appear that those substances are listed in Maryland regulations. However, those substances can still be found listed on MDH's website under the title "Maryland Supplemental CDS List " that must be updated and republished on an annual basis.

Senate Bill 614 allows for the Maryland Legislature to update and adjust controlled dangerous substances (CDS) with greater frequency in regard to the rate at which the federal government currently updates them. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

For more information, contact:

Caleb Jasso / Policy Advocate / caleb@jotf.org / 626-224-3543