



## **SB 784 – Criminal Law – Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance – De Minimis Quantity**

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**

**Date: March 8, 2022**

**POSITION: Support**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling issue.

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MCF strongly supports SB 784.

Everyone knows that the 50 year war on drugs has proved to be an utter failure. It resulted in huge numbers of people incarcerated, especially people of color and the poor. It did not reduce crime, it did not lead to less drug use, and it served to worsen the relationship between law enforcement and communities of color.

Making possession of small amounts of controlled substances a civil offense will have a host of benefits. It will:

- save money by reducing court costs
- save money by reducing jail costs
- free up law enforcement to direct their energies toward serious crimes
- reduce the stigma of drug use, which in turn will promote people seeking help for their drug problem
- protect people from the significant consequences of having a criminal conviction on their record

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 784.

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