



TESTIMONY FOR SB0784
CRIMINAL LAW – USE OR POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED DANGEROUS
SUBSTANCE – DE MINIMIS QUANTITY

Bill Sponsor: Senator Carter

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0784 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are concerned about the way that possession of small quantities of drugs are used to create a record for a person, which puts them on the path to incarceration. The possession of small quantities of drugs, along with the absence of any criminal activity should not be treated as harshly as we currently do.

This bill, if passed, would make possession of small quantities of drugs (for example - 10 grams of marijuana, or 2 grams of cocaine) a civil offense vs a misdemeanor. There would be a fine, which would increase with the number of violations. Most importantly, there is also a provision to send repeat offenders to a drug education program.

We feel that this is an important step forward in treating recreational substance abuse properly and attempting to treat it, as opposed to trying to lock more and more people up. There have been enough young lives ruined over this.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.