



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 1342 – Cannabis - Legalization and Regulation (Cannabis Legalization and Equity Act)
House Judiciary Committee
March 8, 2022**

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

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

Chairman and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1342 – Cannabis - Legalization and Regulation (Cannabis Legalization and Equity Act) with amendments. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Sixteen 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, and it is time for Maryland to join their ranks. HB 1342 sets us on the pathway to legalize recreational cannabis, in small amounts for personal use, while restoring the rights of those previously convicted of personal possession through automatic expungement of criminal records. Legalization and regulation of cannabis will reduce the stress on our criminal justice system, allowing for more resources to be used to prevent and mitigate serious crimes. It will provide much needed revenues to the state to meet the needs of Maryland's residents. Most importantly, providing justice to those who have been convicted in the past, is morally just.

With legalization and regulation of a brand-new industry, businesses will fill the market need for cannabis products, bringing new jobs to fulfill demand. It is imperative that, whenever we have the opportunity to create new jobs, that we ensure workers have a voice in that process. Those who create the entirety of the value of any business should have a say in their own future. Therefore, we support the following amendments to HB 1342, that will provide the workers in this new industry a level playing field by which they can exercise their rights in the workplace:

On p. 32, after line 5, please insert:

(J) Each application or renewal application for a license from an entity that has 10 or more employees needs to include an attestation signed by a bona fide labor organization stating

that the applicant has entered into a labor peace agreement with such bona fide labor organization.

(K) The maintenance of a labor peace agreement with a bona fide labor organization shall be an ongoing material condition of maintaining a cannabis establishment license with 10 or more employees beginning 200 days after the cannabis establishment hires its 10th employee.

Maryland's unions ask that you include strong Labor Peace language within this legislation. California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia have Labor Peace language in their recreational cannabis legislation, and those states are enjoying a boom in recreational cannabis business license applications and business profits. Far from being a hindrance, Labor Peace provides a level of security for workers and businesses by creating continuity across the industry.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB 1342 with the above amendments.