



Maryland General Assembly
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Annapolis, MD - March 3, 2022

Testimony from LaWann Stribling, Strib'ble District LLC

Support: Cannabis - (HB1342)

Thank you for your commitment to end the “intentional” war on drugs. Before I go into the referendum request, I would like to begin with why Social Equity in Cannabis is extremely important.

In order to understand how we got to this point of inequalities, one needs to know the history behind the War on Drugs. In 1930, Harry Anslinger was appointed by his father to be the first Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, now known today as the DEA. From his appointed positions Anslinger opined for extremely harsh drug laws and ridiculously long prison sentences. This began the foundation that ultimately led to the mass incarceration of people of color, mainly those of African and Mexican descent. From then, Police Departments began to have militarized access to raid homes and businesses of Black and Brown residents which included known musicians, actors and actresses.

Persecuting Black and Brown Residents destroyed the backbone for these families for centuries to come. It is 2022 and we are still suffering from the damage caused by Anslinger’s – and later Richard Nixon’s, ramped up War on Drugs. This War on Drugs has created a profitable business for Private Prisons, bail bonds and cities across the country and nation. Anslinger associated cannabis use with the enabling of Black and Brown residents with the belief that it gave us a sense of entitlement for success. Being able to use laws to harass, incarcerate and murder have created the world we live in today that is full of inequities, inequalities and injustices.

Addressing the social inequities in Cannabis today would free those incarcerated, change the racist laws surrounding drugs and plants and give hope to our current and future generations. Social equity in Cannabis would allow families to rebuild what has been stripped from them. Addressing the equity would begin to correct the decades of unfairness to many Black and Brown families. It’s HOPE, hope that we can live our lives using natural holistic methods for wellness without criminalization and prosecution. To have a way for families to build up wealth and change the climate of poverty, red lining, lack of education and resources.

In 2019 I was hoping a local dispensary in Maryland would be given the opportunity to expand but that didn't happen. They were 1 amongst other minority owned businesses that were not awarding license expansion. If we are here to address social equity and the intentional drug war on black and brown residents then correcting these wrongs should not be a 2nd thought. I encourage a favorable vote on HB1342. I encourage a favorable vote on SB692 and SB844.

I aspired to apply to be a processor on the cottage level for cannabis infusions. That dream quickly faded when I began to read the application process. That dream would not come to fruition with current policies that emphasize the need for excessive equity and capital. I do not possess either! I could not afford step 1 in the application process which cuts my family's cottage business dreams down. Providing low barriers of entry into the industry seeks to amend the history of injustices surrounding marihuana, poverty, redlining, mass incarceration and lack of wealth and resources for Black and Brown residents. I'm HOPE, I'm a great example of needing equity, equality and inclusion as a family owned bootstrapping cottage business.

It is past time to correct the foundational racist laws that govern our everyday lives.
#lastprisonerproject #520

I fully support bills SB844, SB692, HB1342 and support bill 833 with amendments to address social equity, home grow, decriminalization and cottage businesses.

Harry Anslinger's quotes:

“ . . the primary reason to outlaw marijuana is its effect on the degenerate races “ --- (attributed to) Harry Anslinger during congressional hearings

“Marihuana leads to pacifism and Communist brainwashing.” — (attributed to) Harry Anslinger during congressional hearings (era 1947-48)

“Negro entertainers with their jazz and swing music are declared an outgrowth of marihuana use which possesses white women to tap their feet.” — statements to Congress by Anslinger, FBN - 1937-50:

Thank you for allowing my submission,

LaWann Stribling, a Wife, Mom, Entrepreneur, Advocate & Lobbyist

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Ref: [Anslinger's Quotes](#)