



Maryland General Assembly
 Maryland Economic Committee
 Annapolis, MD - February 15, 2023

Testimony from LaWann Stribling, Strib'ble District LLC

Support with very detailed amendments: Cannabis - (HB0556)

Thank you for your commitment to end the "intentional" war on drugs.

Commision: Cannabis is an herb grown naturally before prohibition from the ground and from the sun. Cannabis is an herb as other herbs like lavender, chamomile, mullein, mugwort all grown naturally from the ground and from the sun. Cannabis education is needed to understand it should not be viewed as another intoxicant like alcohol and tobacco. Alcohol and Tobacco possess no healing properties and cause damage to you physically and emotionally. The board should be in line with individuals that produce from the ground like farmers. I feel the alcohol and tobacco request has no place in Cannabis and should forever be separate entities. Hulu has a wonderful documentary called Cannabis Evolution, it breaks it down to understand the science behind the plant. In my opinion addressing why residents choose to self medicate would open the possibilities to explore why our residents choose to do so. Please take some time to really learn the truth about the Cannabis plant and not the hysteria purposely caused to create these unimaginable hardships of our daily lives.

Full decriminalization of cannabis would not require a Field Enforcement Division. History has shown what policing disenfranchised communities does, we don't need further enforcement in areas that still haven't addressed the constant harassment of our community members.

Social Equity: There is no way imaginable to determine who has been affected by the war on drugs and disenfranchisement by zip code. As a Maryland Descendant of Chattel Slavery I am still trying to crawl up from the dirt up under my feet. My family has been continuously disenfranchised since being enslaved. The hurdles are non stop in every direction and moving from one zip code to the other in hopes of a better life just leaves you still completely struggling because you never had the wealth to support you in the beginning. I have a 27 years old son who was born out of wedlock to a homeless teen mom, you know he is highly upset with me because I didn't set him up for his future, he was wondering why his mom didn't have a car for him to drive at 16 and a college fund ready for his graduation. How as someone who is still trying to truly LIVE in this society that has oppressed me and my ancestors. Social Equity begins with following the history of that person's last name. Social equity begins with addressing the poverty in our community outside of a zip code. This is generations of oppression and redlining, this situation did not happen overnight. I will refer you to watch episode 6 of The New York Times 1619 Project on Hulu. There you will see the information to support my statements.

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 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 am here to advocate for small businesses located throughout the state and not by zipcode who have evidence of generational disenfranchisement, trauma and the effects of the war on drugs.

As a business owner in the state and a medical cannabis advocate, caregiver and patient I feel discriminated against. Plant count should increase to allow patients the ability to heal at home with limited income resources. Regarding all hindrances including the ownership of guns. How can I truly protect my household and myself? As an American Descendant of Chattel Slavery being protected is the number 1 priority. There are business owners and residents that use various prescribed drugs that alter one's mindset along with using alcohol and they are not restricted from owning and possessing firearms.

Studies have been done within the last few years that show alcohol and other prescribed drugs are far more dangerous than cannabis. In 2009 a study was done on alcohol, cannabis and alcohol/cannabis consumption and the effects on driving. "Epidemiological studies have been inconclusive regarding whether cannabis use causes an increased risk of accidents; in contrast, unanimity exists that alcohol use increases crash risk."
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19340636/>

MPP release comparing alcohol and cannabis: <https://www.mpp.org/special/marijuana-is-safer/>

[As National Institute on Drug Abuse health scientist Ruben Baler put it:

"You can die binge-drinking five minutes after you've been exposed to alcohol. That isn't going to happen with marijuana," [...] "The impact of marijuana use is much subtler."

But does that mean cannabis' grass is greener or are we simply trading one toxic drug for another? Or are we finally seeing a flipping of these 'vice substances' where a truly medicinal plant that has a wide range of health benefits in comparison to drinking alcohol and liquor (which are known-carcinogens and predominately is being consumed for an evening's festivities and pleasure) is surfacing as the top preference among people around the world.]
<https://www.healthmj.com/cannabis/alcohol-marijuana-use/>

I'm seeking 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, for myself, my family and the generations that will come after me. It is past time to correct the foundational racist laws that govern our everyday lives.

I fully support bills to address social equity, home grow, decriminalization, farming rights, abuse victims rights and small melanated cottage businesses.

Cannabis overall has many benefits when you use it respectfully and responsibly. For me at 46 years old my main points of wellness for using this medicine are a great way to relax from the demands of my busy life and schedule, it helps to improve my focus and organizational methods and sparks that creativity that sits dormant as an introvert.

<https://www.weresurviving.com/post/cannabis-freedom-day-520>

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

I somewhat support bill 556 with very detailed amendments to address the commission, 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

linktr.ee/sribbles

sribbletreats@gmail.com

7720 Jacobs Drive

Greenbelt MD 20770

Deputy Director NORMLMD

lawann.marylandnorml@gmail.com

Ref: [Anslinger's Quotes](#)

http://reefermadnessmuseum.org/HarryAnslinger/Addendum_AnslingerPsy/AnslingerQuotes.htm

MLK/FBI on Hulu documentaries
1619 Project New York Times Articles
1619 Project Hulu documentaries
Exterminate All the Brutes HBO Max Documentaries

The National Cannabis Festival truly did its thing AGAIN! As a 1st timer to the Policy Summit to a returning Advocacy Vendor to a Ticket Holder to enjoy the festivities the entire showcase was set up for everyone's enjoyment that's 21 and over. If you didn't get a chance to attend the Summit this year, be sure to sign up for next year when it is available. The Amphitheater at the Ronald Reagan Building gave off a natural flowy intimate vibe for these one on ones and panelist discussions. You missed the opportunity to hear from amazing Women in Advocacy like Toi Hutchinson President & Founder MPP to US Senate Candidate Gary Chambers Jr Gary Chambers for Louisiana | Do Good. Seek Justice. Did I mention the matter of water retention? It is always a great place to be when you get to learn new things. I find it peculiar that this summit was held at the Ronald Reagan Building "Just Say No"!

Now that 420 is out the way let's get back to focusing on ACTION!

That action being advocating, educating and lobbying for Parents, Adults and Children Patients to have #cannabisfreedom. Cannabis Freedom should be a birth right for every individual born. Are you aware that prior to the introduction of hypodermic needles cannabis was medicine for everyone? I recall opening the medicine cabinet in our family home in NWDC growing up and seeing tincture bottles. Cannabis as medicine can be traced back 6000 years. You can find many references in medical journals from China, India & Egypt. These journals document the uses of hemp for its protein rich fibers, oils and seeds to produce cloths, paper and rope. India lists cannabis as 1 of the five sacred plants of Hinduism. Cannabis was integral in worship. People started using it to alleviate epilepsy, rabies, rheumatism, anxiety, and even bronchitis and asthma. To this date cannabis is an essential ingredient to a popular drink called bhang.

Historical evidence suggests China was the 1st culture to use cannabis to alleviate pain and other various treatments. Even with the medicinal benefits, back in 4000 B.C. Physicians warned their patients that using the plant excessively could cause them to see demons.

In Medieval Times a Persian Physician lists cannabis as one of the most effective drugs for curing edema, gout, headaches, severe wounds, as well as epilepsy. In the 1300s Africa is recorded for using cannabis to treat asthma, fever, malaria, and dysentery. Europeans relied on cannabis as a means of treating various conditions such as cough, tumors, and jaundice. In the 1600s Spanish Conquistadors brought hemp cannabis to North and South America. It took another 200 to 300 years before Cannabis therapeutic benefits were discovered in America. In

the 1830s to 1840s an Irish Physician named William O'Shaughnessy advocated the use of cannabis for treating rheumatism and nausea both in England and America. He discovered that the drug was completely safe, so he began prescribing it to his patients, which brought him a fair deal of success. One of his biggest achievements came when he managed to successfully treat muscle spasms caused by rabies and tetanus. Dr O'Shaughnessy introduced Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica to England and America. In the 19th Century Marihuana became mainstream medicine in the west. Pharmacies sold cannabis-based cures and more than 100 papers were published on the therapeutic uses of cannabis.

Learning about the foundations of Cannabis around the world makes you wonder how this amazing plant became a prohibited schedule 1 drug. Dr. O'Shaughnessy's research also led to the development of intravenous therapy. The hypodermic needles were also invented around this time. This discovery pushed the treatment of medical marihuana to the beginning of extinction. Vaccinations were invented like the tetanus that put cannabis in the redundant category along with the invention of synthetic painkillers like aspirin. In 1937 The Marihuana Tax Act completely terminated the use of Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes. This is the foundation of our profitable criminal justice system and failed mental healthcare programs.

Drafted by the Founding Father of Cannabis Prohibition Harry Anslinger. The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 is a U.S. federal law that imposed tax on the sale of cannabis, hemp, or marijuana.

According to Wikipedia: The total production of hemp fiber in the United States in 1933 decreased to around 500 tons per year. Cultivation of hemp began to increase in 1934 and 1935, but production remained low compared with other fibers. Interested parties note the aim of the Act was to reduce the hemp industry through excessive taxation largely as an effort of businessmen Andrew Mellon, Randolph Hearst, and the Du Pont family. The same parties argue with the invention of the decorticator, hemp was an economical replacement for paper pulp in the newspaper industry. Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst realized cheap, sustainable, and easily-grown hemp threatened his extensive timber holdings. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury and the wealthiest man in the US, invested heavily in the Du Pont family's new synthetic fiber, nylon, to compete with hemp.

The American Medical Association (AMA) opposed the taxation because the tax was imposed on physicians prescribing cannabis, retail pharmacists selling cannabis, and medical cannabis cultivation/manufacturing. The AMA proposed cannabis instead be added to the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act. The taxation 'law' was passed despite objections of the American Medical

Association. Dr. William Creighton Woodward, legislative counsel for the AMA, objected to the taxation on the grounds the bill was written by Du Pont lawyers without the legally-binding time to prepare their opposition to the bill. He doubted their claims about marijuana addiction, violence, and overdose; he further asserted that because the Spanish word Marihuana was largely unknown at the time, the medical profession did not realize they were losing cannabis. "Marijuana is not the correct term ... Yet the burden of this bill is placed heavily on the doctors and pharmacists of this country."

After hearings with lawyers from Du Pont Chemicals and the Hearst Newspapers Group, the taxation was passed on the grounds of 'differing' reports and hearings. Anslinger also referred to the International Opium Convention from 1928 included cannabis as a drug not a medicine. All state legislators approved identical 'laws' against improper use of cannabis (for ex. the Uniform State Narcotic Act). By 1951, however, spokespeople from Du Pont, Hearst and others came up with new improved rationalizations, and the Boggs Act superseded the Marihuana Taxation Act of 1937. In August 1954, the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 was enacted, and the Marihuana Taxation Act was included in Subchapter A of Chapter 39 of the 1954 Code.

Now that we got some history behind Cannabis Prohibition, are you aware the State of Maryland is 1 of the last states to decide if they will legalize cannabis? Are you aware that Maryland is still arresting residents for cannabis even though we have a legal medical program? In 2020 91% of arrests in Baltimore, MD were cannabis related. In Maryland, cannabis ownership of fewer than 10 grams is legalized and punishable by a civil fine of up to \$100. It is a crime to have any amount of marijuana in your possession with the intent to sell it. The maximum penalty is five years in jail and a fine of \$15,000 if the quantity is less than 50 pounds. The penalties are the same with weights larger than 50 pounds, except that a five-year obligatory minimum jail sentence is applied.

Maryland has a "drug kingpin" legislation that punishes elevated smugglers with at least 20 years in jail and up to 40 years in jail, as well as penalties of up to \$1 million. In addition, transporting marijuana is a crime in Maryland, with any cannabis violation involving five kilos or more being deemed smuggling. The maximum penalty is 10 years in jail plus \$10,000 in penalties if the amount is between five and 45 kg. The maximum penalty for trafficking is 25 years in jail and \$50,000 in fines for amounts higher than 45 kilos. For drug trafficking while in possession of a handgun, a term of at least five years and up to twenty years is imposed.

According to the Maryland Reporter, medical marijuana boosted tax revenue. The "drug" injected \$10,371,437 into the state revenue in the 2019 financial year. The figure was more than what the entire state spent, which was to the tune of \$5,608,806. Proceeds from medical marijuana sales could have funded the state expenditure that year. This figure marked a

magical leap from about \$3.5M in the previous year. Maryland companies earned a whopping \$96 million altogether.

I ask again, why is this amazing plant being used to criminalize citizens that choose to medicate naturally? It is our responsibility as residents to correct the racist wrongs of the past. We don't need another study or report to show you the conditions melanated individuals have been living under with the Cannabis Prohibition. As an advocate for justice, I try to donate and bring awareness to matters of importance. When it comes to criminal injustices our state is complicit in many falsified facts to make the case stick and win in the court of law. It is our duty to speak against these injustices and to fight for the power of the people. Martin Mitchell and Stanford Fraser recently held an expungement clinic in Laurel MD. From their event I was introduced to Quiana Johnson, Founder of Life After Release Organization. I was overcome with excitement because I was not aware that we had a local organization for formerly incarcerated, especially woman owned. Life After Release (LAR) is a formerly incarcerated women-led organization in the DMV area (DC-Maryland-Virginia). We are organizing to build a post-conviction movement where we have the right to challenge our convictions and the system responsible for convicting us in the first place. Our work is grounded in a vision of self-determination for directly-impacted communities and has four main pillars....

The focus is Cannabis Freedom! As most of you are aware Jonathan Wall's trial begins today in Baltimore, MD. The action for this month is to support cannabis freedom in Maryland, The Country and World by advocating to free Jonathan Wall and all other non violent residents incarcerated by the Intentional War of Drugs. Jonathan's support team is requesting you show up at the court house to show your support throughout the duration of this trial. Click the link for more details.

LaWann Stribling
Strib'ble District LLC
Deputy Director MDNORML

Resources Below:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2561263/>

<https://greencamp.com/history-of-medical-marijuana/>

<https://www.breakingasias.com/china/chinas-ancient-cannabis-culture/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leary_v._United_States

<https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/1996/96sec5.pdf>