



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Testimony on Maryland House Bill 556 Cannabis Reform

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the committee

FROM: Yves Brady, Member of Progressive Maryland

DATE: 2/17/2023

POSITION: Favorable with amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 556. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots nonprofit organization with regional chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our **strong support for HB 556, with amendments.**

I'm so excited and happy we're legalizing cannabis here in Maryland. I have been using cannabis for most of my adult life to help with my anxiety symptoms. It's been one of the few substances that has helped me lead a regular, productive life and knowing that I can legally possess the medicine that makes my life easier, and that the General Assembly is committed to passing legislation to further aid in legalization is phenomenal.

This committee and the legislature in general is going to go down in history as leaders that brought us into the future equitably and I want to thank you for that. I'm especially supportive of the provisions added about testing which will ensure our residents aren't consuming harmful substances.

In addition to my strong support of this bill and my gratitude to this committee for taking it so seriously, I want to express my support of adding an amendment for labor peace. Workers in this emerging industry deserve the right to choose unionization without the threat of retaliation, and they deserve the support of this legislature that has already taken us so far. This legislature is obviously committed to supporting Black and Brown people, women, disabled people, all members of our community. Adding a Labor Peace Agreement will only further this support.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 556.**

Yves Brady