



# METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL AFL-CIO Unions

**HB 556 - Cannabis Reform**  
**Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 17, 2023**

## **Support with Amendments**

To: Hon. C.T. Wilson, Chair & members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in **support with amendments** for *HB 556 - Cannabis Reform*. My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO—our central labor council coalition represents over 100 affiliated local unions and close to 80,000 proud union members in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard counties, and Baltimore City.

The Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO supports a bill that sets up an equitable system of legalization and regulation centering around social equity prioritizing impacting communities and community reinvestment, and labor peace agreements.

A "Labor peace agreement" is an agreement between a marijuana establishment and a bona fide labor organization protecting the state's proprietary interests by, at a minimum, prohibiting the labor organization from engaging in picketing, work stoppages, or boycotts against the cannabis establishment. A "Bona fide labor organization" is a labor union representing, or is actively seeking to represent, cannabis workers.

Labor peace agreements help support a fair process for workers to decide whether they would like union representation without intimidation or retaliation by employers. The Economic Policy Institute estimates U.S. employers spend nearly \$340 million each year on advisors that conduct " 'union vulnerability tests' and provide companies with important recommendations for crushing union drives at their companies." Labor peace agreements in cannabis licensure will ensure workers can choose to form a union in a neutral environment, without employer interference.

Social equity is an incredibly important piece of cannabis legalization, and we are appreciative of the pieces placed in this bill. We ask that labor peace agreements be included to promote social equity and ensure good sustainable jobs for Marylanders by requiring freedom of choice without interference, opening access for collective bargaining for wages, benefits, racial and gender equality and equal treatment, safe working conditions.

For these reasons, **we support HB 556 with amendments.**

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney L. Jenkins, President