



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 249
Motor Vehicle Administration - Driver Education Program – Cannabis**

Sponsor: Senator Kramer

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports Senate Bill 249**, which requires the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration to “*include information on the laws relating to and the risks of driving while under the influence of cannabis,*” as part of the state’s driver’s education curriculum.
- AAA’s concerns about the legalization of recreational cannabis have always been based upon the inherent risks to traffic safety.
- Fatal crashes involving drivers who were delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-positive doubled in Washington state after cannabis legalization, according to research by the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety \(2020\)](#).¹ Crash rates and insurance claims also increased in Colorado, Nevada and Oregon after recreational cannabis legalization passed. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 2018) ².
- [Data from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice](#) shows the number of fatalities with cannabinoid-only or cannabinoid-in-combination (with other drugs and alcohol) positive drivers increased 153%, from 55 in 2013 to 139 in 2017. ³
- Cannabis can affect people differently, making it challenging to develop consistent and fair guidelines, and there continues to be insufficient scientific data to provide motorists with guidance on the use of the drug in a way that does not impact their ability to drive safely.
- With the use of recreational cannabis slated to take effect in a few months in Maryland, AAA wants to ensure that an intensive public education campaign, with a focus on the dangers of drugged driving takes place.
- We are supportive of SB 249, as its passage would incorporate critical information in Maryland’s current driver’s education curriculum to new drivers concerning the risks of using cannabis and getting behind the wheel of a vehicle.
- [According to AAA, to date, 22 states](#) have legalized recreational cannabis, but only Massachusetts has incorporated a driver’s education component as a result of that legalization.
- As an advocate for the safety of motorists and all roadway users, AAA remains concerned by the safety implications of individuals driving impaired whether it be by alcohol, cannabis or other drugs.

- On behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic's over one million Maryland members, we thank Senator Kramer for sponsoring this legislation and urge the Committee to give **SB 249** a **favorable** report.

¹[Legalization of recreational marijuana increases crash risk \(AAA, 2020\)](#)

²[Crashes rise in first states to begin legalized retail sales of recreational marijuana, \(Colorado, Nevada, Oregon and Washington\) \(Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Highway Loss Data Institute October 18, 2018\)](#)

³[Impacts of Marijuana Legalization in Colorado – A Report pursuant to Senate Bill 13-283, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, October 2018](#)

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