



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 516—CANNABIS REFORM**

**BY THE GREATER BETHESDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 9, 2023**

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 550 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on Senate Bill 516—Cannabis Reform.

The cannabis industry is one of the country's fastest growing industries. Nationally, an estimated 428,000 people now work in the legal cannabis industry, and that number will only continue to increase. The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce supports this industry as it is an important part of Maryland's economy, now and moving forward.

We support what many surrounding states have already done, which is to legalize cannabis for adult use. However, we are agnostic on the regulatory approach the state takes, including the licensing structure, and would simply hope that whatever tax structure the committees deem appropriate would allow the State to compete with the illicit market and prevent diversion of legally produced cannabis into the illicit market.

In addition, we do support the employer protections included in the bill on page 72, lines 16-22. Language like this is important, especially in those industries that are safety-sensitive.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable vote on Senate Bill 516.