



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:
Letter of Information
Seante Bill 516
Cannabis Reform
Senate Finance Committee

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Griffith and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,400 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

As the policy debate surrounding the legal adult-use of cannabis has evolved, Maryland employers have anxiously watched the regulatory rollout in other states and the successes and challenges they have experienced. The primary concern to Maryland businesses has been ensuring that safeguards will be put in place, should Maryland voters choose legalization, to give employers access to every available tool to maintain a safe environment for their employees and customers.

As introduced, SB 516 establishes the regulatory, licensing and taxation system for the adult-use cannabis industry in Maryland. The Maryland Chamber of Commerce submits this letter not having a policy position on the entirety of SB 516 and its licensing and regulation of a specific but new industry, however, **Maryland businesses are very supportive of the language in Subtitle 13, Section 36-1301(F) contained in the bill as introduced** enshrining an employer's right to maintain drug testing policies and utilize the most current methods of testing to make decisions about workplace safety. Although, the Chamber is greatly concerned over the recent decision by the House to remove the important employer protection and workplace safety language from House Bill 556.

If these protections are removed, the use of drug free workplace policies, drug screening during a hiring process and drug testing during workplace accidents will all be called into question creating enormous confusion and liability for Maryland's job creators. This would jeopardize even the most basic safety protocols used by employers like maintaining a drug-free workplace. Maryland businesses simply want access to the tools and protocols they're already using to keep themselves, their employees, and their customers safe. A study done by the National Institute on Drug Abuse showed that workers that tested positive for cannabis had 55% more industrial

accidents, 75% more absenteeism, and 85% more injuries than employees who tested negative. Cannabis impacts depth perception, motor skills, and reaction time, causing adverse and sometimes fatal outcomes, especially for those in safety-sensitive industries like health care and construction.¹ Those accidents and injuries can be avoided by protecting an employer's ability to promote safety and screen for dangerous situations.

The Maryland Chamber of commerce values the hard work that has gone into SB 516, and we acknowledge the importance of maintaining safe workspaces for employees, employers and customers. We appreciate your consideration of these comments on **SB 516**.

