



March 28, 2023

Senator Willam C. Smith, Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of The Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong **favorable** support for House Bill 1071 – Criminal Law and Procedure - Cannabis - Fines for Smoking in Public, Stops, and Searches. **This bill is on the 2023 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

This legislation seeks to alter maximum fines for cannabis use in a public setting while also prohibiting the use of certain types of cannabis-related evidence as the sole basis of establishing reasonable suspicion or probable cause of criminal activity. Additionally, this bill will bar the admissibility of evidence obtained in violation of its provisions in legal proceedings.

Throughout the nation, Black people are disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and more likely to be arrested. Considering this, there is a need for reformative policy that will prevent further criminalization, especially regarding cannabis-related searches in Maryland. In light of the legalization of cannabis use in Maryland, it is critical that measures are put in place to prevent and establish protections against odor-based searches. This bill will establish a policy that prevents officers from stopping motorists and searching their vehicles without evidence of intoxication or any other just cause, protecting Marylanders from illegal searches and abating unjust criminalization. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports House Bill 1071 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland