



February 2, 2023

Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Judiciary Committee and Members of the Committee  
Taylor House Office Building, Room 101  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Inc. has voted to offer **favorable** support for House Bill 280 - Criminal Law - Cannabis-Related Offenses - Civil Penalties. **This bill is a 2023 legislative priority of the Black Caucus.**

This bill aims to substitute criminal penalties with civil penalties for an array of offenses, including but not limited to possession, possession with the intent to distribute, and cultivation and/or manufacturing cannabis products. In lieu of harsh consequences, like imprisonment, this bill will provide reasonable alternatives, such as Maryland Department of Health drug-related educational programs and hours of community service.

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 overcriminalization and undue penalties, especially regarding cannabis-related offenses in Maryland. In light of the legalization of cannabis use in Maryland, it is critical that penalties regarding cannabis possession, cultivation, and manufacturing are reformed and adjusted to align with the current legislative climate. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports House Bill 280 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

*Jheanelle Wilkins*

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Chair, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland