



TESTIMONY FOR HB0280
Criminal Law - Cannabis-Related Offenses - Civil Penalties

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Davis

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0280 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our jails are full of people whose only crime was to possess an amount of marijuana in excess of the personal use limit. Given the fact that these people have not committed any kind of a violent crime, nor have they been convicted of selling marijuana, it seems a steep, steep penalty for possessing a little too much of a substance that made them high.

Instead of putting them in jail, ruining their chance to finish their education or get a job, it seems like a much better idea to simply fine them. This bill would substitute a civil fine of \$250 or community service for up to 75 hours. For people who are guilty of cultivating marijuana, the fine increases to \$5,000.

This is plenty of deterrent for a relatively petty crime.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.