

7 February 2023

Judiciary Committee

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Vote YES on House Bill 280

Delegates of the Judiciary Committee,

I support changing cannabis related offenses by converting current criminal penalties into civil penalties. Last fall, Marylanders like me voted overwhelmingly to legalize marijuana. The vote, in part, represents a repudiation of decades of failed “war on drugs” approaches to marijuana regulation. While creating a legal framework for the purchase and sale of marijuana is a great step forward, the work is not yet done to make our criminal justice policies more equitable and just.

The criminalization of marijuana has contributed to broken communities and the prison-industrial complex. Too many of our community members are in jail, or face criminal penalties, for actions relating to marijuana. In addition to efforts to legalize marijuana sales, the legislature should decriminalize penalties related to tertiary marijuana offenses. Doing so will save the state in enforcement and imprisonment and help repair our communities from the decades of failed criminalization policies.

Sincerely,

Alexander Payne

Resident of House District 46

916 N. Calvert St.

Baltimore, MD 21202