



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate David Moon, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: March 7th, 2023
RE: HB1071 Criminal Procedure Reasonable Suspicion and Probable Cause Cannabis

The MLLC supports HB1071 Criminal Procedure Reasonable Suspicion and Probable Cause Cannabis

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1071.

Despite having decriminalized possession of certain amounts of cannabis in 2014, Black and Brown Marylanders are still disproportionately targeted for cannabis-related charges.¹ Maryland currently leads the nation in incarcerating young Black men, incarcerating the highest percentage of people who are Black in the U.S., more than twice the national average;² and as of 2019, Maryland incarcerated more than 18,500 Latinx individuals.³ Having legalized cannabis usage in 2022, HB1071 ensures that individuals are not targeted as perpetrators of crime merely because of the presence of cannabis.

HB1071 provides that a finding or determination of reasonable suspicion or probable cause relating to possession of contraband or other criminal activity may not be based solely on evidence of the odor of cannabis, the possession of or suspicion of possession of cannabis, or the presence of money in proximity to cannabis. This legislation will benefit the Latino community that is often disproportionately targeted for crimes from being singled out because of the presence of cannabis.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1071.

¹ [A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform. \(2020\). American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\).](#)

² [Rethinking Approaches to Over Incarceration of Black Young Adults in Maryland. \(2019, November 6\). Justice Policy Institute.](#)

³ [Nellis, A. \(2021\). The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons. The Sentencing Project.](#)