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House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 - Employment Discrimination – Use of Cannabis Products

Carrington & Associates, LLC is writing to express our strong support for House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513, which addresses the prohibition of employment discrimination based on an individual's use of cannabis products under certain circumstances. This joint effort by Delegates Wilkins, Toles, Bofo, Fennell, Jackson, and Turner, as well as Senator Alonzo Washington, represents a significant step in establishing fair and reasonable guidelines regarding the use of cannabis products in the context of employment.

House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 takes a balanced approach by recognizing the rights of both employees and employers. It acknowledges the evolving landscape of cannabis legalization and decriminalization across various states, emphasizing the need for a nuanced and updated approach to employment policies.

The key provisions of House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 that I find particularly commendable include:

1. **Protection Against Discrimination:** The bill safeguards individuals from employment discrimination based on their lawful use of cannabis products outside of work hours, ensuring that such use does not adversely impact their professional lives.
2. **Drug Policy Requirements:** Employers conducting drug testing are required to provide updated drug policies to all employees before the effective date of the policy. This ensures transparency and awareness among the workforce regarding the employer's stance on drug use.
3. **Clarifications on Employer Actions:** The bill clearly outlines that it does not authorize employees to be impaired by, use, or possess cannabis products during work hours. Additionally, it specifies that employers are not required to commit acts that would violate federal law or jeopardize federal contracts or funding.
4. **Recognition of State Laws:** House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 respects the legalization of cannabis under state laws and allows employees to use cannabis products lawfully without facing adverse employment actions, provided it occurs outside the employer's premises during non-work hours.

By supporting House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513, Maryland has an opportunity to lead in creating a fair and inclusive work environment that adapts to the changing legal landscape surrounding cannabis use. We believe this joint bill strikes a reasonable balance between individual rights and employer prerogatives.

We respectfully request you consider the positive impact this legislation could have on employee rights, workplace harmony, and the overall well-being of the workforce. Your support for House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 would contribute to the creation of a more just and modern employment framework.

Thank you for considering our position, and we look forward to witnessing the positive impact House Bill 525/Senate Bill 513 can have on Maryland's cannabis landscape. Please do not hesitate to contact Darrell Carrington, Founding Board Member and former Executive Director of the Maryland Cannabis Industry Association (MDCIA), at 732-763-7398 or darrell.carrington@verizon.net.