

Chairman C.T. Wilson  
Room 231  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SUPPORT - HB 525 Employment Discrimination - Use of Cannabis**

Dear Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the one thousand members of the Anne Arundel County Professional Fire Fighters Association, IAFF Local 1563, and the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, I petition for your support of HB 525- Employment Discrimination - Use of Cannabis.

Because of the relentless hours that we serve and the conditions of our duty, Fire Fighters are often subject to a myriad of maladies. These can include sleep disruption, chronic pain, back and musculoskeletal injury, headaches, lung disease, heart disease, PTSD, depression, anxiety, gastrointestinal disease, cancer and many more.

Fire Fighters deserve access to the full spectrum of healthcare options available to the public, and this includes cannabis.

Cannabis offers an extremely safe therapeutic threshold, and treats a diverse cross section of pathologies. Cannabis can also be a beneficial alternative to opioids, alcohol, and other counterproductive interventions.

While we acknowledge some people's concern about cannabis access, there is little evidence to support adverse safety in the work place. Examination of jurisdictions like Pittsburgh, where cannabis has been permitted for years, has not yielded a single adverse event. On the contrary, members and management alike have reported greater health and morale, and fewer behavioral and emotional disciplinary actions . Further, current screening protocols, along with burgeoning frontiers like saliva testing facilitate employers desire to assess prohibited cannabis use during working hours.

We look forward to discussing this matter, and presenting a compelling advocacy for HB 525 at the February 23 hearing. Please feel free to contact us anytime with questions, or for more information.

Thank you for your time, and consideration.

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