



TESTIMONY FOR SB0404 CRIMINAL LAW – CONTROLLED DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES AND FIREARMS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0404 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 members are in complete support of the intent of this bill to reduce the sentences of individuals who have been incarcerated for possession of what are now legal amounts of marijuana, and also to make possession or transfer of stolen firearms a felony.

Given the changing climate and the updated laws for possession of marijuana, it makes sense to update the statutes to allow for growing an amount of marijuana for personal use and sharing that with friends. It also makes sense to allow individuals who have been incarcerated for possessing less than 50 pounds of marijuana (the current statutory limit) and serving the mandatory minimum sentence to be able to request that their sentences be reduced.

We also agree that firearm charges should be dealt with more severely, due to the epidemic of shootings in our country. Possessing, selling, or transferring a stolen firearm, or trafficking a regulated firearm into the state should be a felony, as should selling or possessing a firearm that has had the serial numbers removed.

These are both regulations that fall squarely in the realm of 'common good'. However, we do not understand why possession or distribution of less than 448 grams of cocaine is included in this legislation. It has been well documented that marijuana is not as addictive as cocaine and we have not legalized cocaine possession in the state. We believe that portion of the legislation should be stricken.

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