



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB 513 - Employment Discrimination - Use of Cannabis Products

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeyer and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Today, I am presenting SB513 – Employment Discrimination – Use of Cannabis Products because our State recently legalized cannabis possession and usage. With legalizing cannabis, our state recognized the unfair discrimination and targeting of Black and brown communities, blue collar workers, and working families, and how our policies on the War on Drugs have only led to misery and distrust in the government. Yet this discrimination is allowed to continue when it comes to employment.

There are thousands of cases in Prince George's County alone where people have been robbed of their employment opportunities for using a substance that is considered legal and acceptable. If there is no impairment to work function the following day, there is no reason as to why any person should be subject to cannabis usage testing, and more unacceptably, fired for their own free usage.

The bill I am proposing would mend the current situation, allowing for employees to use cannabis on their own leisure time, as declared legal by the state, without being subject to firing if it does not impair their work function. This would level cannabis with alcohol and create more equitable workplace conditions for people who enjoy their rightful leisure in different ways.

Additionally, this bill creates a prohibition for employers who discriminate in hiring based on past cannabis convictions. Currently, there is a non-instant expungement of incarceration records, and thus people with possession convictions over 1.5 ounces, or those who have had additional charges, are unable to immediately get rid of their unjust charges. Even for those that had their record expunged, an employer is still allowed to discriminate against them if they learn about the previous conviction. If those who have been unjustly incarcerated are denied employment, they truly will not be free.

As a state, we must protect the free leisure of our residents, and truly amend the mistake of making cannabis an illegal substance. This bill will be able to increase the quality of life of our constituents and take a burden off the shoulders of many who are worried about their employment if they engage in non-harmful activities.

For this reasons, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 513.