



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Finance Committee
Annapolis, MD - January 28, 2025

Testimony from LaWann Stribling, STRIB'ble District LLC

Unfavorable: Cannabis - On-Site Consumption Establishments and Cannabis Events [SB0215](#) ([HB0132](#))

The Cannabis - On-Site Consumption Establishments and Cannabis Events (SB0215) bill could infringe on the community's right to host events without a permit in several ways. This bill would impose regulations and permit requirements for events where cannabis is consumed, which could limit certain freedoms and create barriers for individuals and organizations wishing to host cannabis-related events in a more informal, holistic, spiritual or grassroots manner.

Here are a few reasons how the bill could infringe on community rights to host events:

1. Requirement for Permits and Regulation:

One of the primary ways this bill could infringe on community rights is by requiring specific permits for any event where cannabis consumption is allowed. Under SB0215, a community or individual would likely need to go through a formal application process to receive permission from local or state authorities to host events where cannabis consumption is permitted. This could limit the ability of smaller organizations or community groups to host such events without bureaucratic hurdles.

Impact: For communities that prefer a more informal or decentralized approach to hosting events (like pop-up gatherings, festivals, or private gatherings), the necessity of obtaining a permit could create a financial or administrative barrier. These events might no longer be able to take place without the proper approvals, reducing autonomy in organizing cannabis-friendly gatherings.

2. Restrictions on Where Events Can Be Held:

The bill likely includes stipulations on where cannabis consumption can legally take place, which could infringe on communities' rights to host cannabis events in private or public spaces. For instance, the bill may restrict events to certain types of venues or designated areas that meet specific requirements—perhaps limiting where these events can be held (like requiring them to be in licensed cannabis consumption lounges or event spaces).

Impact: Communities or groups might find themselves limited in their choices of venue and unable to hold cannabis events at locations they would prefer. This could reduce freedom for local organizers who want to create more inclusive or flexible spaces for cannabis events that align with their community values.

3. Increased Government Oversight and Control:

The bill's framework for regulating on-site cannabis consumption might increase government oversight in a way that could infringe upon community freedoms. For example, local authorities could require monitoring or reporting on cannabis consumption events, enforcing certain restrictions on the size of the event, the number of attendees, and even the types of cannabis products allowed.

Impact: Increased regulation could stifle the ability for grassroots, community-driven cannabis events to thrive freely. Communities may feel that this added control diminishes their right to organize events on their terms or within their own local culture. It could particularly affect small, independent event organizers who might not have the resources or desire to navigate the complex legal landscape.

4. Potential Financial Burdens:

Depending on the cost of obtaining permits and meeting legal requirements, this bill could impose financial burdens on individuals or small businesses wanting to host cannabis events. Permit fees, insurance requirements, and compliance with various safety regulations could make it more difficult for certain groups—especially those with limited financial resources—to organize events.

Impact: This would particularly affect community organizations, nonprofits, or smaller local event planners who may not have the budget for extensive legal and regulatory requirements. This could inadvertently exclude certain groups from hosting events, infringing on their right to self-organize and create spaces for cannabis enthusiasts.

5. Effect on Private Gatherings:

In some cases, the bill may also affect private events where people may want to consume cannabis in their own space. If the law mandates that public or private events with cannabis consumption need permits, people hosting private parties or gatherings could be limited in their

ability to do so freely, especially if the event is larger than a certain size.

Impact: It could lead to concerns about privacy and freedom of choice. People who just want to host small gatherings with cannabis consumption may feel like they are being unnecessarily regulated or penalized for something they consider a private matter.

6. Restrictions on the Types of Events:

The bill could limit or heavily regulate the types of events where cannabis consumption is allowed. For example, certain festivals, community gatherings, or even educational events about cannabis might find themselves restricted from allowing consumption, unless they meet very specific criteria.

Impact: It may unintentionally curb the diversity of cannabis-related events, especially those that seek to integrate cannabis culture with other types of events (such as art, music, or food festivals). Communities could feel that their rights to host events in a more inclusive way are being compromised.

Conclusion:

While SB0215 aims to create safe and regulated spaces for cannabis consumption, it could infringe on the right of communities to host cannabis events without seeking a permit or following strict regulations. This would create a more controlled environment that might stifle the grassroots, informal nature of cannabis gatherings, limit freedom in choosing venues or event types, and impose financial and bureaucratic barriers on small-scale event organizers.

Thank you for accepting my testimony for our community and individuals like me that are social equity and did not qualify but utilize the herbs holistically as medicine and food would be dramatically affected.

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