

My name is Victoria Jonas. I am a Prince George's County resident, owner of an ancillary cannabis business, and a member of the NORML community. I am here to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill SB215. While I respect the legislative intent behind this bill, I believe it poses significant concerns that warrant further scrutiny and consideration before proceeding.

**1. Unfair Burden on Small Ancillary Cannabis Businesses:** SB215 mandates state registration for all cannabis events, which disproportionately impacts small ancillary cannabis businesses. The event registration fees outlined in this bill are prohibitively high for small brands, making it difficult for them to operate fairly and compete with larger entities. Many of these businesses are already navigating a challenging regulatory landscape, and this additional financial burden could stifle their growth and limit their opportunities.

**2. Prohibition of Cannabis Consumption at Events:** The bill's prohibition of smoking at cannabis-friendly gatherings undermines the ability to create safe spaces for recreational cannabis use. Cannabis users are often forced to seek alternatives that may be less safe or less controlled, defeating the purpose of fostering responsible use within community events. This restriction also hampers the ability of businesses to host immersive experiences that align with consumer expectations and promote education around safe cannabis consumption.

**3. Burdensome Fees and Regulations:** In addition to the high event fees, SB215 introduces overly burdensome regulations that create significant barriers for small businesses and community organizers. The cumulative effect of these fees and requirements risks discouraging entrepreneurship and innovation in Maryland's growing cannabis industry. These regulations fail to strike a balance between necessary oversight and the promotion of a thriving, equitable market.

**4. Economic Impact on Small Brands and Local Communities:** The financial and regulatory hurdles imposed by SB215 disproportionately affect small businesses and local entrepreneurs, many of whom are already struggling to establish themselves in a competitive market. These businesses are essential to Maryland's economy and play a crucial role in fostering innovation and community engagement. By imposing these barriers, the bill risks creating an uneven playing field that favors larger, more established entities.

**5. Need for Alternative Approaches:** Rather than implementing the measures outlined in SB215, I urge the General Assembly to explore alternative approaches that support small businesses while maintaining necessary regulatory standards. For instance, offering tiered fee structures based on business size or event scale could reduce the financial burden on small brands. Additionally, creating clear guidelines for safe consumption spaces at events would encourage responsible use without jeopardizing public safety.

In conclusion, while I understand the intent behind SB215, I strongly believe it is not the right solution in its current form. This bill imposes unnecessary financial and regulatory barriers that hinder the growth of small ancillary cannabis businesses and limit safe recreational spaces for

cannabis consumers. I urge this committee to oppose this bill and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a more balanced and effective approach.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further insight as needed.

Sincerely,  
Victoria Jonas

[victoriajonas94@gmail.com](mailto:victoriajonas94@gmail.com)