



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

HB1202 Support

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger.  
Chair, Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB1202 – Criminal Law - Drug Trafficking Crime - Definition

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing to support HB1202 on behalf of the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City. This bill addresses a critical gap in our law enforcement and criminal justice process. At its heart, it is a gun bill. This bill intends to ensure that the most grave perpetrators of violence in our communities face accountability.

By changing the definition of "Drug Trafficking Crime" to include misdemeanor charges or a conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor in violation of § 5–602(B)(1) and § 5–603(B), we are ensuring that anyone distributing drugs with a firearm is held accountable. Legislation that has decriminalized cannabis related crimes over the years has been essential to address systemic and structurally racist policies in Baltimore City, however, demoting criminal cannabis charges to misdemeanors has left a gap in combating drug traffickers. It has inhibited the ability of law enforcement and prosecutors to hold accountable individuals who carry firearms while distributing cannabis.

Under current law, an individual can drive around your neighborhood with vast quantities of cannabis and a firearm, and only be charged with two misdemeanor crimes. If that same individual were holding a small bottle of fentanyl pills and a firearm, that individual would be charged with a drug trafficking crime and face a minimum of 5 years, up to 20 years. The danger we are trying to address with this legislation is the firearm. Holding criminal dealers accountable and removing dangerous weapons from our streets is an essential step in keeping Marylanders safe.

Despite the changes in cannabis legislation, an underground economy for cannabis still exists, and our prosecutors still see cannabis as a key factor in a lot of homicide cases. Holding those



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that distribute cannabis while carrying firearms accountable is an essential step in ensuring safety in our communities.

I urge you to give a favorable report on HB1202. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matias C. Cacheiro  
Deputy Director of Government Affairs  
Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City