

The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross, Councilwoman At Large, City of Glenarden,  
Maryland, United States Air Force Veteran

Testimony on Senate Bill 925

Determination: Favorable With Amendments

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony grounded in my service as a municipal leader, a veteran, and a public servant committed to public safety, community stability, and accountable governance. Senate Bill 925 reflects a continued effort by the State to modernize criminal law while recognizing the evolving legal status of cannabis and the need to address serious firearm related offenses. The bill attempts to balance public safety with proportional justice, and for that reason I offer support with amendments.

From a municipal perspective, clarity in law enforcement standards is essential. The authorization allowing limited personal manufacturing of cannabis products without volatile solvents provides a controlled framework that reduces unsafe underground activity. By clearly defining personal use amounts and adult sharing, the bill helps law enforcement distinguish between personal conduct and criminal distribution. This clarity supports local governments that must manage community expectations while preserving public safety.

The provisions allowing courts to reconsider certain mandatory minimum sentences imposed in earlier periods recognize that sentencing policy has evolved. Communities across Maryland, including municipalities like mine, continue to experience the long term social and economic effects of disproportionate sentencing practices. Allowing judicial review where rehabilitation and public safety can be demonstrated is consistent with responsible governance and strengthens trust in the justice system.

Equally important are the strengthened penalties addressing firearm trafficking, stolen firearms, and unserialized weapons. Local officials regularly confront the consequences of illegal firearms entering neighborhoods. Elevating these offenses reinforces accountability and aligns with the expectation that legalization in one area of law must be paired with stronger safeguards in another.

However, amendments are necessary to ensure effective implementation at the local level. First, municipalities should be provided clear guidance and coordination authority regarding residential manufacturing standards to ensure zoning, fire safety, and nuisance protections are preserved. Without coordination, local governments may face enforcement challenges that shift burdens onto municipal resources.

Second, the bill should include a requirement for statewide public education regarding lawful cannabis manufacturing limits and firearm compliance requirements. Experience shows that compliance improves when residents clearly understand legal boundaries.

Third, data reporting requirements should be added to track outcomes related to sentence modification petitions and firearm enforcement actions. Transparent reporting allows policymakers and municipalities to evaluate whether reforms are improving safety and equity.

Senate Bill 925 moves Maryland toward a more balanced framework that recognizes personal liberty while reinforcing accountability where community harm is greatest. With the proposed amendments, the legislation can better support local governments, strengthen public trust, and

maintain a strong public safety posture. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments.

Respectfully submitted, The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross