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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2026

Chair Valderrama
Vice Chair Charkoudian
House Economic Matters Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

FAV Written Testimony for HB1519 Cannabis - Management Service Agreements, Advertising, and Penalties - Alterations (Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act)

Dear Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the House Economic matters Committee,

Maryland has taken meaningful steps toward building a legal cannabis market grounded in fairness, accountability, and economic opportunity. As the state continues implementing this framework, it is essential that equity remains at the center of our approach, particularly as it relates to who is able to compete, grow, and succeed in this emerging industry.

House Bill 1519 Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act advances that goal. Disparities in advertising and promotion within the cannabis market threaten Maryland's equity objectives. Social equity license holders and new market entrants face significant barriers to visibility and consumer outreach, while legacy operators who benefited from years of regulated advertising under the former medical cannabis framework retain a competitive advantage. Without access to comparable marketing opportunities, many equity-focused businesses are placed at an immediate disadvantage, limiting their ability to establish brand recognition, attract customers, and remain viable.

House Bill 1519 works to restore balance by reopening cannabis advertising in a responsible and carefully structured manner, consistent with the advertising standards originally adopted when cannabis was first legalized in Maryland. Those initial rules allowed businesses to promote themselves while maintaining strong public health safeguards. Reinstating a similar framework ensures that all licensees, particularly social equity license holders, have access to the same tools that helped earlier operators succeed.

Importantly, the Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act does not permit unrestricted advertising. The legislation establishes clear guardrails to ensure promotions are conducted responsibly. Advertising remains prohibited from targeting minors, using imagery attractive to children, making unsubstantiated therapeutic or medical claims, or being placed near sensitive locations

such as schools, childcare centers, treatment facilities, playgrounds, and public parks. Robust age-verification requirements for digital platforms further ensure that outreach is limited to adults.

The impact of House Bill 1519 extends beyond individual businesses. By creating a more fair advertising environment, Maryland strengthens its ability to support communities that were disproportionately harmed by cannabis criminalization. Equitable access to marketing enables small and equity-owned businesses to compete legitimately, generate revenue, create jobs, and contribute to the regulated marketplace. This not only strengthens compliance but also helps reduce reliance on the illicit market while increasing state revenue through a stable, transparent system.

Additionally, the Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act enhances clarity and transparency in areas of ownership, control, management agreements, and license transfers. By requiring regulatory oversight and clear reporting standards, the bill ensures that equity goals are not undermined through hidden control arrangements or predatory contracts. Defined timelines, administrative accountability, and public reporting requirements reinforce confidence in Maryland's regulatory framework and promote long-term stability within the industry.

Maryland has the opportunity to continue leading with intention. By pairing economic growth with strong consumer protections and meaningful equity measures, House Bill 1519 fosters a cannabis market that is inclusive, competitive, and responsibly regulated.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1519 Cannabis Reform and Opportunity Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District of Maryland