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Bill Synopsis for Maryleaf SB594 - Cannabis – Advertising – Alterations

SB594 updates Maryland’s cannabis advertising rules so licensed businesses can communicate basic information to adult customers without loosening protections for minors.

Right now, the rules are so tight that even responsible businesses struggle to advertise or share basic information without worrying they are crossing a line. This bill fixes some of the biggest real-world problems while keeping the guardrails in place.

The bill first cleans up the law by clarifying what counts as advertising and defining what a “therapeutic or medical claim” is. Any medical claim still has to be backed by real scientific evidence and include risk information. That does not change.

The biggest change deals with the 85 percent adult audience rule. Under current law, businesses must prove that at least 85 percent of an ad’s audience is age 21 or older using very specific data. In reality, many media companies either do not provide that data in the required format or cannot provide it at all. That has made it extremely hard for licensed businesses to use normal advertising channels. The bill requires the Cannabis Administration to accept the audience data media companies actually provide and to create a clearer alternative method by regulation. In short, it turns an unclear rule into something businesses can actually follow.

The bill also finally allows dispensaries to put limited signage at their own storefronts. This is not about billboards or flashy marketing. It simply allows a dispensary to identify itself as licensed, provide contact information, and include safety and poison control information. The size limits are small and tightly controlled.

Another fix clarifies that news stories, interviews, and documentaries can mention cannabis businesses without being treated as illegal advertising. This removes confusion that has made media outlets hesitant to cover the industry.

Just as important, the bill keeps all the existing protections aimed at preventing youth exposure. Advertising still cannot target anyone under 21, cannot use cartoons or youth-focused imagery, cannot show consumption, and must continue using age gates online.

Bottom line: this bill does not open the floodgates. It simply lets legal businesses communicate basic information in a responsible way while keeping strong protections for minors in place. For these reasons we respectfully request a favorable report.

Submitted on behalf of Bloom Medicinals by Carrington & Associates, LLC.

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