



Senate Bill 439
Employment Discrimination – Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees – Use of Medical Cannabis
Senate Finance Committee
Position: Favorable

This legislation addresses employment protections for fire and rescue public safety employees who are seeking to participate in Maryland’s medical cannabis program. Specifically, the bill would prohibit employers from taking adverse employment actions against firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, cardiac rescue technicians, and other fire and rescue personnel based solely on their lawful use of medical cannabis or possession of a valid written certification under Maryland law.

SB 439 recognizes that medical cannabis is lawful under state law and seeks to ensure that public safety employees who are qualifying patients are not denied employment opportunities, terminated, or otherwise discriminated against because of lawful, off-duty medical use. The bill makes clear that an employer may not refuse to hire, discharge, or otherwise discriminate with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment based solely on an employee’s status as a certified medical cannabis patient. At the same time, the legislation maintains important safeguards by not requiring employers to permit on-duty impairment, nor does it compel employers to violate federal law or jeopardize federal funding or regulatory compliance.

This bill reflects an effort to balance workplace safety with fairness and consistency in employment practices. Fire and rescue public safety employees perform critical and demanding duties, and maintaining safety standards is essential. However, employees who lawfully use medical cannabis to treat qualifying medical conditions should not face automatic or unjust employment consequences solely because of that status, provided they are not impaired while on duty. By clarifying employer obligations and employee protections, SB 439 promotes both public safety and equitable treatment in the workplace.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report Senate Bill 439.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted respectfully,

Jeffrey Buddle, President
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 23 IAFF local affiliates from the following jurisdictions:

Federal: National Capital Federal Fire Fighters

State: Baltimore / Washington International Airport

Local: Annapolis City, Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland City, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, Talbot County, Worchester County