



February 17, 2026

**Senate Finance Committee**  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, MD

Re: SB 0439 – Employment Discrimination – Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees – Use of Medical Cannabis

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to report favorably on SB 0439. I have been a medical cannabis patient for many years under the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC) Program. During that time, I was able to graduate law school, with nearly all As and Bs in my final two years. I studied for the UBE over 9 weeks for 60-80 hours a week, and got a final score of 289, a score higher than is needed to waive into all 41 UBE jurisdictions. Whereafter, I was welcomed into the legal community and licensed to practice law in Maryland. Thanks to those who went before me, the record of bar ethics opinions affirms that being a MMCC patient should not be a bar to my practicing law.

I should not have to choose between working and being in pain or not working and living on public benefits. Nor should our emergency responders and firefighters.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Maryland State Government Article, § 20-602 were created to address this problem. Because of these laws, having disabilities that require accommodation cannot be used to deny employment on its own. The possibility of an interactive accommodation process stands between the mismatch in job accommodations and the possibility of litigation. However, currently, as the law stands, no first responder or firefighter could argue that being a MMCC patient is a reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. They don't even have a chance.

Passing SB 0439 will put the burden back where it belongs, on the employer. If there is a particular personnel matter or role/responsibility that requires that a first responder or firefighter use opioids as pain medicine instead of medical marijuana or requires that the person filling that role not be on any similar medications, then it is on the employer to prove their reasoning.

Lastly, a constitutional right to choice in one's own medical treatment decisions should mean that I can responsibly and legally choose medical marijuana instead of relying on opioids for pain management. We should give our firefighters and first responders that choice.

Sincerely,

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