



Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy

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February 16, 2026

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

**Re: SB 439: Employment Discrimination - Fire and Rescue Public Safety Employees
- Use of Medical Cannabis - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 439. Our member-led organization works to ensure that Maryland's drug policies are health-centered and rooted in the lived realities of our community. SB 439 is a common-sense update that protects Maryland's public safety professionals from losing their jobs over a legal, doctor-supervised medical treatment.

Maryland's firefighters, EMTs, and other public safety professionals work in high-pressure, physically demanding environments that can contribute to PTSD, anxiety, and chronic physical pain. When our laws fail to protect their right to access effective, legal medicine off duty, we jeopardize the very stability they need to do their jobs well. Loss of employment can be one of the most significant disruptors of health and community safety. By shielding these employees from discrimination, SB 439 ensures that we keep experienced, high-performing professionals in the workforce where they are needed most. This bill recognizes that a worker's health and their livelihood are deeply connected.

Current employer drug testing practices for cannabis and its THC metabolites do not promote public safety. Standard drug screenings detect inactive metabolites that can remain detectable long after any impairment has passed. A positive test is not a sign of current impairment; it is often a record of a patient's medical choice made days or weeks prior. SB 439 maintains high safety standards by focusing on on-duty performance. It preserves an employer's authority to address actual impairment while ending the practice of punishing employees for private, off-duty prescribed medical treatment that does not impact their ability to serve.

As more Marylanders utilize medical cannabis for legitimate health needs, our employment laws must catch up. SB 439 brings Maryland in line with approaches adopted in other states, reducing the stigma around medical cannabis use and moving us toward a model which supports the well-being of our public servants who have sacrificed so much to keep us safe.

We urge the Senate Finance Committee to support a policy that values both public safety and the fundamental rights of patients and respectfully request a favorable report on SB 439.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Corey Bryce
Advocacy Workgroup Member
Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy