



**Senate Finance Committee – [Senate Bill 594](#)  
Position: Support with Amendments**

Written Testimony of Curio Wellness  
Thursday, February 26, 2026

Madam Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

**Curio Wellness supports (with amendments)** the direction and intent of Senate Bill 594 because it continues Maryland’s work of treating regulated cannabis like the lawful, accountable industry it is—moving policy toward maturity and away from stigma-driven fear.

We especially appreciate SB0594’s effort to replace subjective standards with clearer, enforceable guardrails. For example, the bill narrows the “targets minors” framework by focusing on direct targeting and specific youth-oriented depictions (e.g., cartoons/mascots) rather than broader, more subjective tests. This shift makes compliance more predictable while preserving strong youth protections.

SB0594’s intent to modernize cannabis advertising is welcome. **However, the exterior signage provisions – like the narrow “allowed content” list and sizing specifications – risk undermining that goal by treating dispensary signage as if it were primarily a public-safety disclosure panel rather than a normal, regulated retail communication.** In practice, this checklist does not help adult consumers navigate lawful businesses, **and it does not reflect how Maryland successfully handled public signage under the medical program for more than six years without incident or obscenity concerns.**

**The medical market’s experience is instructive:** Maryland operated a tightly regulated, age-gated cannabis system for years with a signage approach that did not require an overly prescriptive, regulator-written list to prevent inappropriate messaging. That history suggests the State can protect youth and prevent objectionable content through clear, objective standards and enforcement—without hard-coding a narrow set of “permitted” words that will quickly become outdated and that may unintentionally keep the legal industry from communicating like other lawful, regulated businesses.

Suggested amendment concepts:

- Remove the statutory content checklist outlined on pages 3 and 4 of the bill and instead align adult-use exterior signage rules with the medical cannabis signage framework that was in place for years without incident—while retaining strong prohibitions on content that is obscene, deceptive, or directed to minors.
- If the Committee prefers to retain guardrails in statute, use objective prohibitions (e.g., no youth-targeting imagery, no false or misleading claims, no obscene material) rather than a restrictive “only these items may appear” list that functions like a quasi-warning label and creates compliance confusion.

We appreciate SB0594’s recognition that audience composition compliance should be grounded in real, readily available data from the advertising medium itself. However, the bill also requires the Maryland Cannabis Administration to adopt an “alternative method” for determining audience composition. From an operator’s lens, creating a new, open-ended discretionary pathway risks becoming a future constraint on lawful advertising—especially if the alternative method becomes more restrictive than the baseline standard after businesses have already invested in campaigns, contracts, and compliance reviews.

If the statute already sets workable guardrails (including the 85% 21+ expectation), any additional “method” should be clearly bounded so it cannot become a hidden “gotcha” or shift requirements midstream without legislative transparency or remove entirely.

Suggested amendment concepts:

- Eliminate or define parameters/limits for any “alternative method” in statute (objective, readily verifiable, and not more restrictive than the baseline standard).
- Require stakeholder input and clear public guidance so licensees can comply confidently and consistently.

**Maryland’s legal cannabis industry is at an inflection point. The policy conversation is increasingly—and appropriately—about how to de-regulate thoughtfully so compliant private businesses can grow, compete, and deliver on the State’s goals: tax revenue, quality jobs, social equity success, and strong public health and safety outcomes.**

**SB0594 is directly connected to those outcomes because the legal market cannot fully displace illicit activity if the most regulated actors remain unable to communicate responsibly while less regulated or illegal actors advertise freely.**

The Maryland Cannabis Advisory Board has underscored this point: overly restrictive and arbitrary limits on public-facing communications and outreach stunt market maturation and



undermine economic and social equity goals, while unregulated markets fill the information vacuum.

**Curio supports SB0594 as a targeted improvement.** At the same time, HB1519 reflects a broader package of reforms that—alongside SB0594—would help the market mature with clearer rules and performance:

- Modernizing “control” and allowing common financing/management structures with guardrails (including clearer treatment of management service agreements and related business relationships).
- Reducing barriers that prevent capital formation and social equity operationalization, including reforms that can expand compliant investment pathways and reduce prolonged transfer restrictions.
- A more workable advertising framework—consistent, predictable, not paternalistic, including clearer rules for outdoor advertising locations.
- Clearer enforcement and penalties targeted at real public health and safety risks, including stronger consequences for unlicensed sales of intoxicating products that bypass Maryland’s testing, labeling, and age-gating safeguards.

For these reasons, Curio Wellness respectfully supports SB0594 with amendments to ensure the bill fully achieves its intent: normalization, clearer standards, and responsible adult communications with strong youth protections. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the sponsor and Committee staff, provide operator perspective (including real-world compliance examples), and—if helpful—share redline concepts consistent with the bill’s goals. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on smart, workable cannabis policy.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy Bronfein  
Co-Founder, Curio Wellness

Founded and based in Maryland, Curio Wellness is a family-owned and operated cGMP-certified cannabis company and trusted wellness partner, available in over 90 dispensaries statewide. Curio is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce\*: more than 40% of our workforce is female and 35% identifies as Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or multi-racial; among management, 40% are female and 18% identify as Black, Hispanic, or multi-racial.

\*Demographic percentages are based off employee self-reporting. Approximately 20% of employees “opt-out” of self-reporting race.

