

Call The MD State Finance Committee! VOTE NO ON SB -188

It Can Put Black Vegan Restaurant Owners
In Jail for Selling Food Labeled as a "Veggie Meat"



NAACP

Gangster Vegan Organics



Uniting the voices of Maryland's Plant-based food lovers for healthy & sustainable living & to achieve "Food Justice" for those who do not have access or means to obtain healthy plant-based food!



Individuals

- Dr. Milton Mills, MD
- Dr. Amara Nwanpah, MD
- Dr. Theodore Watkins, MD
- Dr. Columbus Baptiste, MD



Sell a product labeled Veggie “Chicken Burger” + Go To Jail



SB 188 – Criminalizes the labeling of Food as a “Veggie Meat” for up to 1 year of prison & up to a \$10K fine

According to the 2018 Maryland Correction Enterprises (MCE) annual report, food services is one of the top work skills taught to inmates. If SB 188 is passed, returned citizens would be banned from using their skills to sell plant-based food labeled as “veggie chicken” without the threat of going back to jail.

MARYLAND TAXPAYERS SPEND \$288M ON CORRECTIONS IN BALTIMORE



As of 2018, African-Americans make up 70% of Maryland’s prison population but only 34% of the entire Maryland population. Most of the incarcerations resulted from the sale of illegal substances. SB 188 threatens re-incarceration of African-Americans for the sale of “legal plant-based foods” that scientific studies have shown can help to reverse chronic diseases in communities of color.

Why SB 188 – The “Misbranded Food Labeling Bill” Could Lead To the Mass Incarceration of Minority Plant-Based Food Sellers



SB 188 amends [Section 21-210 of the Health-General article of the Annotated Code of Maryland](#) by adding that a “food” is misbranded if “it is offered for sale in the state with a label that identifies the product as a meat or meat product and the product: (I) contains animal tissue cultured from animal cells outside the animal from which the tissue is derived; or (II) is made from plants or insects.” [Section 21-256\(1\) prohibits](#) a person from “manufactur[ing] or sell[ing] any food, drug, device, or cosmetic that is ... misbranded.”

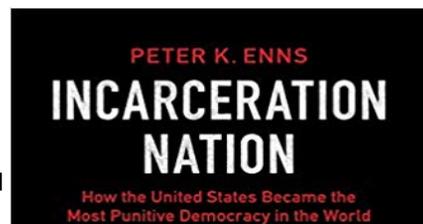
Because there are no specific penalties prescribed in SB 188, therefore penalties in [Section 21-1215](#) apply. Section 21-1215 prescribes both criminal & civil penalties for violating Subtitle 2 (the Maryland Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act) of Title 21, which includes Section 21-210.

Section 21-1215(b) states that “a person who violates [Subtitle 2] ... is guilty of: a **misdemeanor** and on conviction is subject to: (1) a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or **imprisonment not exceeding 1 year, or both**; or

(2) if the person has been convicted once of violating Subtitle 2 of this title, a fine not exceeding \$25,000 or **imprisonment** not exceeding 3 years or both.”

This means that criminal penalties could exceed \$50K in less than 1 week for first-time violations and could exceed \$100,000 in 4 days if already previously convicted of violating SB 188. SB 188 threatens violators with the most **severe penalties** out of all the label censorship bills in the U.S.

Maryland studies have shown that African-Americans are more likely to go to jail for misdemeanors due to an inability to pay fines.



How SB 188 Could Be

The New Jim Crow

In Baltimore

- According to Happy Cow - one of the oldest online directories for locating vegan/vegetarian or veg friend restaurants, in 2019 there were over 24,000 [veg-friendly eateries in U.S.](#), including 1,474 exclusively vegan restaurants.
- Baltimore ranked #34 in the Matador rankings of “**The 50 best US cities for vegans and vegetarians**”
- Happy Cow lists **10** vegan restaurants in Baltimore and **15** vegetarian eaters and **over 50%** of the restaurants are African-American owned.

- Most of the African-American owned vegan restaurants sell cultural “soul food” labeled Veggie chicken, Veggie sausage, Vegan crab cake – to also address the health problems in communities of color. Instead these sellers could go to jail.

<https://matadornetwork.com/read/best-us-cities-vegans-vegetarians/>

The Washington Post
Reprinted from the Washington Post

The fastest-growing vegan demographic is African Americans. Wu-Tang Clan and other hip-hop acts paved the way.

Despite the rise of plant-based meat and “Veganuary,” only 3 percent of Americans are vegetarians.

(Washington Post illustration/iStock)



By **Laura Reiley**

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