



NORTH STAR LIBERTY GROUP

Submitted to: The Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: February 28, 2020

Testimony of Kamani Jefferson, Co-Founder, and Principal at North Star Liberty Group

In Regards to: House Bill 1449 - An Act concerning Health - Medical Cannabis Reauthorization Act

Chairwoman Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Kamani Jefferson and I am the Co-Founder and Principal at North Star Liberty Group. North Star Liberty Group is a government relations and consulting firm based here in the DMV that advocates for reforming existing cannabis laws at the municipal, state, and federal levels while remaining focused on ensuring racial and economic equity in the booming cannabis industry. I am also a resident of Maryland's 22nd Legislative District.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for House Bill 1449, which seeks to repeal the limit on licenses for medical cannabis growers and processors.

By lifting the cap on licenses, House Bill 1449 will better serve patients by increasing their access to life-saving medicine that is safe, high-quality, and affordable. Several patients, particularly those in rural areas, have to travel far from their homes to access state-legal medical cannabis. This places an undue burden on patients, especially those suffering from more painful and debilitating illnesses. This alone necessitates an expansion of the program.

Additionally, passing House Bill 1449 would benefit medical cannabis businesses currently operating in the state and eager entrepreneurs looking to enter the industry. This provides a unique opportunity for Maryland to promote racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity in licensing. Successfully diversifying the cannabis industry is an issue that most states, including Maryland, have so far failed to accomplish, and I know we are all eager to see that rectified.

In conclusion, House Bill 1449 will increase patient access to quality medical cannabis, increase participation in the nascent medical program, and expand diversity in the state's medical cannabis industry.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please note that I will be testifying in person as well.

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