



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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## Testimony on Maryland House Bill SB0784:

Criminal Law - Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance - De Minimis Quantity

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Chair, and members of the Judicial Proceedings  
Committee  
FROM: Eileen Finn, Member of Progressive Maryland  
DATE: March 8, 2022  
POSITION: SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB0784. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with 9 chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong SUPPORT for this bill.

I'm a member on Progressive Maryland's Drug Policy Task Force. We envision a society where there is equal opportunity for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs. We believe that harm reduction is a part of a broader movement for racial and social justice.

Maryland is in the top 5 in the country for arrests for possession of marijuana. 96% of those arrested are Black people. Decriminalizing marijuana has done little to decrease the number of arrests for possession. Our prisons are full of people who have been arrested for the simple act of possessing drugs. This does nothing to help people who have substance use disorder. The De Minimis bill will increase the amount of drugs a person can have on them and will treat substance use disorder like the mental health disorder that it is and refer those who are in possession of a controlled substance to treatment for drug use or for mental health treatment. This will, hopefully, decrease the racial inequality of our present system. If we focus on healing people instead of punishing them, we will move closer to a healthier, more equitable society where people are treated with the human dignity they deserve. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation

We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB0784**.

Best Regards,

Eileen Finn, emfinn66@gmail.com