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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: SB 286- Firearms – Right to Purchase, Own, Possess, and Carry – Medical Cannabis

FROM: Maryland Office of the Public Defender

POSITION: Favorable

DATE: 3/28/2022

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender respectfully requests that this Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 286.

Senate Bill 286 would provide medical marijuana patients with the same rights as their fellow Maryland residents. This bill would ensure that individuals do not lose their right to purchase, possess, or carry a firearm, and are thus not subject to unnecessary and potential criminalization for merely registering as a legal medical marijuana patient. Maryland already has robust laws restricting the possession of firearms. The policy purpose of those laws are not strengthened by preventing medical marijuana patients from lawfully possessing firearms. Rather, this law is in line with ongoing legislative efforts collectively aimed at decriminalizing marijuana and reducing the of individuals who may possess and use marijuana in criminal legal jeopardy.

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender appreciates and supports all efforts that effectuate efficient decriminalization of marijuana and reduce negative ramifications of marijuana use.

For these reasons, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender urges this Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 286.

Submitted by: Government Relations Division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender.

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