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Greetings Members of the Maryland General Assembly, Prince George's County Executive Angela S. Alsobrooks, and Members of the Prince George's County Council, including At-Lodge members, we the members of the Coalition of Central Prince George's County Community Organizations, would like to request your indulgence in opposing House Bill 805 and Senate Bill 537 for numerous reasons which we will state below in our collective opposition.

It has been brought to our attention that Senator Brian Feldman (Montgomery County) and Delegate CT Wilson (Charles County) have introduced legislation to allow marijuana dispensaries to open anywhere a liquor store is allowed to operate. Their bills are designed specifically to circumvent current Prince George's County zoning laws regarding where Marijuana businesses can operate. Specifically, the passage of this legislation will allow marijuana dispensaries to open in neighborhood shopping centers, near homes, places of worship, daycares, and schools, and we have seen what liquor stores and tobacco stores can do to a community, so let us not allow the marijuana lobby to do the same to our community.

According to my information, Montgomery County has four (4) cannabis dispensaries, 1) Sweetspot Cannabis Dispensary Olney, 2) RISE Medical Marijuana Dispensary Bethesda, 3) RISE Medical Marijuana Dispensary Silver Spring, and 4) Harvest HC of Rockville Dispensary which includes both medical and recreational cannabis dispensaries. On the other hand, Charles County has three (4) cannabis dispensaries, 1) Dispensary Works, 2) Haven Marijuana Dispensary Maryland, and 3) Spiff Nation Dispensary. It should also be noted that the Charles County Advances Cannabis Reform with New Zoning have set the stage for implementing Maryland's Cannabis Reform Act, following a detailed briefing on zoning.

If House Bill 805 and Senate Bill 537 pass, within Central Prince George's County, what will keep cannabis dispensaries from opening within blocks of each other? Our communities have an overabundance of liquor stores, and these bills would generate that same overabundance of cannabis dispensaries as well, especially in high business areas that are near residential areas, such as shopping centers and strip malls. For example, Warehouse Liquors is located at 7619 Marlboro Pike in Forestville. Freddies Liquors is located at 7700 Marlboro Pike, also in Forestville. If such bills are passed, there could be a cannabis dispensary on either side of both liquor stores and within walking distances of each other. There should not be a rush to allow the availability of cannabis dispensaries to disrupt the wellbeing of the larger community.

We are respectfully asking the Maryland General Assembly, Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, the At-Large Council Members, and the County Council to vote against changing the county zoning to allow Marijuana Dispensaries to be placed in the same locations as Liquor Stores.

Best regards,

Douglas E. Edwards (Electronically Signed)

Douglas E. Edwards

President Emeritus & Community Activist