



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

COUNCILMEMBER LAURIE-ANNE SAYLES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AT LARGE

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

December 1, 2023

Governor Wes Moore,
100 State Circle
Annapolis MD, 21401-1925

Re: Pardon for Cannabis Offenses

Dear Governor Moore,

Since the passage of the Cannabis Reform Act (H.B. 556/S.B. 516) in 2023, the state has more work ahead to improve our justice system that disproportionately incarcerates Black and Brown residents. After President Biden pardoned all simple Cannabis possession charges in Federal and DC Court, we know that you expressed support for issuing pardons for low-level drug offenses. We look forward to partnering with you in this effort.

Since Article II, section 20 of the Maryland Constitution allows you, as Governor, broad power to issue pardons and reprieves, we are eager to partner with you to pardon all non-violent possession Cannabis offenses for amounts less than 2.5oz, the quantity now considered a civil possession offense. Under Maryland law, individuals currently incarcerated solely for possession of Cannabis in amounts less than 2.5 oz are entitled to be released from prison and resentenced to time served; however, they must apply for resentencing. Given the possibility that an individual may not have applied for resentencing due to limited means or prolonged legal representation, a pardon would be just and appropriate.

The progress made at the General Assembly under your leadership has moved us toward advancing criminal justice reform, but there is more to accomplish. We look forward to working with you to continue leading in this space and stand with President Biden and the governors who have taken action on this issue. Thank you for your commitment to correcting the unjust laws

that stemmed from unfair policies to pardon those convicted for non-violent possession of cannabis offenses. In addition, we ask for your support in ongoing initiatives to expunge the appropriate records and continue to eliminate the societal obstacles of those serving under these outdated laws. Correcting our past mistakes of the unequal treatment of Black and Brown residents during the war on drugs must be met with the same urgency we are taking to process licenses and other resources to spur the cannabis industry's continued growth. Thank you for your time and consideration of this timely matter.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles



County Executive Marc Elrich



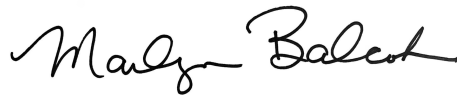
Councilmember Gabe Albornoz



Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez



Councilmember Sidney Katz



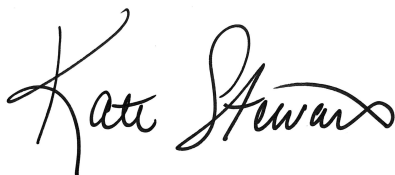
Councilmember Marilyn Balcombe



Councilmember Will Jawando



Councilmember Kristin Mink



Councilmember Kate Stewart



Councilmember Andrew Friedson