



Message from MCPA President

Chief David Morris



HB 1043, introduced by Delegate Valentino-Smith, prohibits “a driver of a motor vehicle from smoking or consuming marijuana in the passenger area of a motor vehicle on a highway; and prohibiting an occupant of a motor vehicle from smoking marijuana in the passenger area of the motor vehicle on a highway.” Consider the facts.

Number of drug impaired drivers where the DRE believed marijuana was involved in causing the impairment.

2011	84
2012	97
2013	130
2014	125
2015	194
2016	195

Number of crashes where DREs determined marijuana was involved.

Year	Cannabis in Crashes
2011	21
2012	27
2013	30
2014	34
2015	46
2016	45 ¹

We have witnessed a steady increase over the last six years in the number of cases where Drug Recognition Experts report a driver under the influence of marijuana. The number of drivers involved in motor vehicle crashes, and those suspected to be under the influence of marijuana, is trending upward, despite marijuana not being legalized and medical marijuana not yet available in Maryland.

We restrict a driver from consuming alcohol while driving or even having access to an alcoholic beverage while driving. The decriminalization of marijuana demonstrably impacts the safety of our motorists. HB 1043, if passed, promotes public safety, imposing criminal sanctions against those who use marijuana while operating a motor vehicle on our highways.

This commonsense legislation overwhelming passed the House, 112 to 23, with bi-partisan support on March 15th. HB 1043 was heard Thursday, March 30th in Senate JPR. While the MCPA/MSA applaud the efforts of Delegate Valentino-Smith, she now needs our assistance pushing this bill out of the Judicial Proceedings Committee (JPR) to a full Senate vote. Please contact your respective state senators and have them urge JPR Chairman Senator Zirkin to put HB 1043 to a committee vote so the bill can be heard and voted on by the full Senate. The MCPA/MSA is confident this measure will pass if given an opportunity to do so on the Senate floor.

Chief David Morris, President
Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

¹ Data provided by Mr. Tom Woodward, MSP, DRE Coordinator