

**ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
ON DECRIMINALIZATION OF MARIJUANA POSSESSION**

BACKGROUND

On November 13, 2018, the ACCF Legislation Committee introduced a resolution to the ACCF membership recommending that the Virginia General Assembly decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana.

Subsequently, President Duke Banks referred the resolution to the Legislation Committee and the Public Services Committee Chair, Jackie Snelling, for review. Members of the Legislation Committee met with Arlington Police Chief Jay Farr and Commonwealth's Attorney Theo Stamos to discuss the resolution as well as arrest data relating to marijuana possession charges.

On January 6, 2019, the Legislation Committee held a meeting and invited Ms. Snelling to provide input on the resolution in her capacity as Chair of the Public Services Committee. Ms. Snelling reported that the Public Services Committee had not yet been fully reconstituted, however her suggested revisions were incorporated by the Legislation Committee and recirculated the new revisions to the Legislation Committee and Ms. Snelling. No further comment on the revised resolution has been received from the Public Services Committee.

The resolution has undergone intensive review since first introduced. The revised resolution set forth below has the unanimous support of the Legislation Committee.

APPROVED by MEMBERSHIP VOTE

5 FEBR 2019:

37 'AYES', 1 'NAY', 2 ABSTENTIONS

RESOLUTION

Whereas, all but 4 states, including Virginia, plus the District of Columbia have adopted "medical marijuana" or more comprehensive cannabis programs;¹

Whereas, Individuals who have been prescribed marijuana for medical reasons continue to be arrested in Virginia;²

Whereas, in addition to legal costs and jail time, those arrested for marijuana possession also may face loss of their driver's license, employment, housing, parental rights, access to financial aid/loans; job discrimination; and deportation;³

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "State Medical Marijuana Laws".

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-medical-marijuana-laws.aspx>, accessed 10/22/18

² WJLA – ABC News, Washington DC. "In some states, medical marijuana cards can't prevent arrests." Accessed 11/30/18 at <https://wjla.com/news/spotlight-on-america/in-some-states-medical-marijuana-cards-cant-prevent-arrests>; See Virginia Department of Health Professions -- Board of Pharmacy, "Information for Patients/Parents and Legal Guardians [regarding CBD & THC-A Oil]".

<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/pharmacy/PharmaceuticalProcessing/Patients.htm>, accessed 10/22/18; Virginia Mercury. "Virginia marijuana arrests hit highest levels in a decade." Accessed 10/22/18 at <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2018/09/25/marijuana-arrests-in-virginia-hit-highest-levels-in-a-decade/>.

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/07/higher-ed-groups-want-end-student-aid-restrictions-applicants-drug-convictions>; Weisberg Attorneys. "What are Virginia's laws regarding marijuana?"

Whereas, 76% of Virginians support decriminalizing possession of small amounts of marijuana;⁴

Whereas, bills to decriminalize marijuana have been repeatedly introduced by members of Arlington’s state Delegation, including Senator Adam Ebbin, Delegate Patrick Hope, and Delegate Mark Levine, most recently Senate Bill 997 being considered in 2019;⁵

Whereas, the Arlington delegation to the General Assembly unanimously supports decriminalization of marijuana.⁶

Be it resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation strongly supports the efforts of the Arlington delegation to secure passage of legislation decriminalizing marijuana possession.

Be it further resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation urges the General Assembly to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana possession by adults so that, at a maximum, only civil penalties with reasonable fines are assessed.

And be it further resolved that the Arlington County Civic Federation urges the Arlington County Board to include marijuana decriminalization as part of its legislative package until possession of small amounts of marijuana is no longer a crime in Virginia.

Vote on Resolution: A motion to approve the Legislative Committee’s Marijuana Decriminalization Resolution was approved by a vote of 37 ayes, 1 nay, and 2 abstentions.

<https://www.weisbergattorneys.com/Articles/What-are-Virginia-s-laws-regarding-marijuana.shtml> accessed 10/22/18; https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/virginia-politics/proposal-seeks-to-decriminalize-marijuana-possession-in-virginia/2015/01/22/2ac46b12-a24c-11e4-9f89-561284a573f8_story.html?utm_term=.afd164500b69

⁴ NBC News. “Poll : ¾ of Virginia voters support decriminalizing marijuana possession”, <http://www.nbc12.com/story/37447660/poll-finds-three-quarters-of-virginia-voters-support-decriminalizing-marijuana-possession/>, accessed 10/22/18 re: Feb 2018 survey by Wason Center for Public Policy – Christopher Newport University. <http://wasoncenter.cnu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Feb-7-2018-Final-2-1.pdf>

⁵ <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+sum+SB997>; <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+mbr+HB1063>

⁶ The legislation committee has confirmed the support of each member of the delegation as of January 12, 2019.