



**NAACP** *National Association For The Advancement Of Colored People*

*Washington, DC Branch*

1000 U Street, NW • Suite 100 • Washington, DC 20001

Monday, April 4, 2022

Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Chairman Mendelson,

The NAACP DC Branch strongly opposes emergency legislation *Medical Marijuana Patient Access Supplemental Extension and Civil Enforcement Emergency Amendment Act* to impose civil penalties for Initiative 71 businesses. In addition, the NAACP DC Branch supports the recommendations from the Minority Cannabis Business Association Equity 2.0 Report.

The NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic empowerment of African-Americans and to eliminate racial discrimination. The NAACP advocates for financial empowerment, black business development opportunities, DEI hiring practices and economic opportunities to close the Black wealth gap for future generations.

In 2014, 65% of District residents voted overwhelmingly in support of Initiative 71. Today, 83% of Democrats support adult use cannabis. Initiative 71 offers legalized business opportunities for District residents, which supports economic empowerment and financial sustainability for Black business owners in the District. African-Americans are largely underrepresented in the licensed cannabis industry whereas most of the I-71 businesses are owned by Black DC Natives. Many African-Americans experience challenges entering this licensed industry. The civil penalties proposed in this legislation will make it harder for many Black-business owners to enter and operate within this licensed system and will adversely affect those who are currently operating under Initiative 71. These resources directly impact access to quality healthcare, education, employment, housing and legal representation in Black communities.

We urge you to ensure I-71 business owners are not adversely impacted by this legislation, further hindering the achievement of racial equity across this business sector. Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact the NAACP DC Branch at [akosua.ali@naacpdc.org](mailto:akosua.ali@naacpdc.org) or (202) 498-5853 for any questions regarding the matter and thank you.

Peace & Power,

Akosua Ali  
President  
NAACP DC Branch

Abiola Agoro  
Political Action Chair  
NAACP DC Branch