


**Council of the District of Columbia
COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MEMORANDUM**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004

TO: Chairperson Phil Mendelson
FROM: Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie 
RE: Request to Agendize Measures for the April 2, 2024, Legislative Meeting
DATE: March 28, 2024

I write to request that the following measures be placed on the agenda for the April 2, 2024, Legislative Meeting:

Emergency Legislation at the Request of the Mayor

- Medical Cannabis Patient Card Extension and 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2024
- Medical Cannabis Patient Card Extension and 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week Emergency Amendment Act of 2024
- Medical Cannabis Patient Card Extension and 4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week Temporary Amendment Act of 2024

To address the burdens associated with becoming a registered medical cannabis patient and provide relief to struggling lawfully operating medical cannabis dispensaries, the Council previously adopted legislation allowing patients with expired registration identification cards to continue purchasing medical cannabis for a short period of time and establishing two-year registration identification cards for new patients.

There remains a need to further reduce the administrative barriers for District residents seeking to access quality medical cannabis and medical cannabis products at licensed dispensaries. There are currently 1,850 District resident patient registrations set to expire during the three-month period of March 2024 through May 2024; where those residents do not renew their patient registrations due to real or perceived administrative burdens, they may be inclined to utilize the more than 220 unlicensed cannabis establishments located in the District. Recent testing by the Metropolitan Police Department at several of these unlicensed establishments uncovered synthetic cannabis for sale that tested positive for amphetamines. Extending the validity of patients' and caregivers' registration cards to six years, from the current two years, will encourage residents to continue to utilize the District's licensed dispensaries to purchase medical cannabis and medical cannabis products. Furthermore, extending the length of time that a medical cannabis patient registration identification is valid to six years will bring the District in line with Maryland, which transitioned to a six-year medical cannabis patient card on September 29, 2022.

Based on ongoing investigations, the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration believes there are approximately 200 unlicensed cannabis retailers operating in the District. On March 27, 2024, a robbery and fatal shooting occurred at an unlicensed retail store on Georgia Avenue. The significant clustering of unlicensed cannabis retail stores along commercial corridors presents an ongoing threat to the health and safety of residents, has an adverse impact on the viability and safety of our commercial corridors, and undermines the financial viability of cannabis establishments that are in compliance with

District law and regulations. To respond to the threat posed by the unlicensed retailers, ABCA needs clear statutory authority to summarily close those businesses and seize any cannabis contraband.

In February 2022, the Council adopted emergency legislation creating the District’s inaugural “4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week.” During this tax holiday, medical cannabis patients were exempt from paying the 6% sales tax period for a 10-day period, which included two weekends. The holiday was quite successful with consumers and lawfully operating medical cannabis dispensaries in the District. This emergency legislation seeks to reinstate this successful tax holiday week again in 2024 during the two-week period of April 15, 2024 through April 28, 2024, which would, again, cover two weekends. The popular “4/20 Medical Cannabis Sales Tax Holiday Week” is critical to the District’s efforts to attract qualifying patients back to the legal market as well as sustain a viable medical cannabis program.

The draft Executive measures are attached. Feel free to contact Legislative Director, Doni Crawford, at dcrawford@dccouncil.gov, with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

cc: Members, Council of the District of Columbia
Office of the Secretary
Office of the General Counsel
Office of the Budget Director
Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs