FEDERAL CANNABIS REGULATIONS WORKING GROUP: CORE GROUP MEMBERS

a working group of experts convened by the Drug Policy Alliance to explore and develop policy recommendations for federal cannabis regulations grounded in public health, equity, and justice reform considerations.

QUEEN ADESUYI

Queen Adesuyi is a policy manager at the Drug Policy Alliance’s National Affairs office in Washington, D.C., where she works to advance several of DPA’s legislative priorities on the federal level, including marijuana legalization with a racial justice focus, drug decriminalization, and eliminating punitive consequences for drug use and previous convictions. She also advocates for equity/racial justice in plans for the District of Columbia’s emerging marijuana industry, in addition to advancing overdose prevention measures and harm reduction in the District.

While at DPA, Queen saw through the introduction of the Marijuana Justice Act, Congress’ first marijuana reform bill that addressed racial justice and justice reform issues. She helped convene and co-leads the Marijuana Justice Coalition. Under her co-leadership, the Marijuana Justice Coalition has worked on the introduction and the historic passage of the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment & Expungement (MORE) Act by the U.S. House of Representatives in the 116th Congress. The Coalition continues to work to see the continued improvement of the MORE Act and its successful reintroduction and movement through both chambers of Congress.

AAMRA AHMAD

Aamra Ahmad is currently the Senior Policy Counsel for the Justice Division of the ACLU and an advocate for federal criminal justice reform. She previously served as legislative counsel to Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-3) and in her previous role at the Federal Public & Community Defenders, oversaw their national litigation strategy that contributed to reduced sentences for over 3,363 people incarcerated under racially unjust drug laws. She also served as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

CHRIS ALEXANDER

Chris Alexander is a New York based political strategist and advocate for criminal justice reform. He currently works as the Government Relations & Policy Manager for Village, a black owned multi-state cannabis company. Prior to joining Village, Chris was an Associate Counsel for the New York State Senate and Policy Coordinator for the Drug Policy Alliance’s New York Policy Office. He has also worked as a staffer in the House of Representatives during the 113th Congress and has led political campaigns on the state and local level. He received his B.A. from Syracuse University and his JD from the City University of New York School of Law.

DANIEL BEAR

Daniel Bear is a Professor with the Criminal Justice degree program at Humber College in Toronto. His research focuses on drug policy, specifically policy relating to cannabis and harm reduction. He also studies the impact of drug policing on police/community interactions, the impact of drug policy on communities, and the use of technology in community safety practices. Professor Bear has a Doctorate in Social Policy from London School of Economics and Political Science and previously worked as part of the ACLU’s Drug Law Reform Project.

CRISTINA BUCCOLA

Cristina Buccola is an attorney and advocate who specializes in cannabis law. As an advocate, a portion of her practice is committed to policy work, relating to racial and economic cannabis justice. She has worked with elected officials on their cannabis platforms and testified in front of the New York and New Jersey State Legislatures. She is also a professor of law at Pace University’s Elisabeth Haub School of Law where she teaches a course she designed on Cannabis Law and Policy. She is licensed to practice in NY, NJ, MA, OR, and IL (ret.).
**Dasheeda Dawson**

Dasheeda Dawson is the City of Portland’s Cannabis Program Supervisor, where she oversees the city’s medical and adult-use cannabis regulatory programs. Supported by an ongoing allocation from the city’s cannabis tax revenue, her office also administers the Social Equity & Educational Development (SEED) Initiatives, including the SEED Grant Fund. She is the founding chair of the Cannabis Regulators of Color Coalition (CRCC) and author of *How to Succeed in the Cannabis Industry*, a workbook published by The WeedHead™ & Company to help entrepreneurs and professionals navigate the legal cannabis industry.

**Eric Goepel**

Eric Goepel is a U.S. Army veteran of the Iraq War and an advocate for ending cannabis prohibition and driving veteran-focused cannabis research. He founded the Veterans Cannabis Coalition in 2018 to create bridges between patient communities and lawmakers to demonstrate the breadth of experience of people who use cannabis medicinally and the societal harms of prohibition. Currently, he is actively building out free compassionate cannabis donation programs in California and pushing for protected access and affordability in Congress. Eric graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a bachelor’s degree in political science with the assistance of the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**Eliana Green**

Eliana Green is an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Root & Rebound, a national nonprofit focused on restoring power and resources—through advocacy, policy reform, and public education—to those most harmed by mass incarceration. Eliana’s work at Root and Rebound entirely focuses on restoring the rights of survivors of the War on Drugs. She does this through direct legal services, community organizing, facilitating cannabis-related corporate partnerships, and policy advocacy led by impacted people. Eliana also serves as the Policy Advisor for The Hood Incubator, whose mission is to reverse the negative impacts that the drug war has on Black communities. Eliana is a double alumnus of Loyola University New Orleans where she earned her J.D. (cum laude) with a certificate in Social Justice as well as her B.A. in Sociology and African American Studies. Eliana is licensed to practice law in both California and Illinois.

**Rachel Knox**

Dr. Rachel Knox, MD, MBA is a cannabinoid medicine specialist and clinical endocannabinologist with a background in family, integrative, and functional medicine. Dr. Knox is co-founder and chair of the Association for Cannabis Health Equity and Medicine (ACHEM), a professional medical association for BIPOC in cannabis that is uniquely centered around health equity. She also chairs the Oregon Cannabis Commission and serves on the boards of Cannabis Regulators of Color Coalition (CRCC), Doctors For Cannabis Regulation (DFCR), Minority Cannabis Business Association (MCBA), the American Academy of Cannabinoid Medicine, and Nuleaf PDX.

**Mike Liszewski**

Mike Liszewski is the founder and principal of Enact Consulting, LLC, a DC-based firm that provides lobby and policy advising services to advocacy organizations on drug policy issues. The firm also advises business entities on regulatory compliance issues. He has served as an in-house regulatory affairs and compliance counsel for a multi-state cannabis company. Prior to founding Enact Consulting, Mr. Liszewski was the government affairs director for Americans for Safe Access, where he was instrumental in the passage of the Rohrabacher-Farr amendment, and several other bills at the state and focusing on creating safe access and protection from discrimination for medical cannabis patients.
LANESE MARTIN

Lanese Martin is a community organizer with a background in electoral campaigns, policy and advocacy on issues impacting Black people and the areas they work, live & play - Lanese supports projects that address systemic inequality. As co-Founder of The Hood Incubator, which is a national grassroots organization, she guides the organization's mission to end the drug war and reverse its impacts on Black communities. Lanese spearheads the organization's political strategy. In less than 5 years she has grown the organization to be the leading voice in the cannabis justice space. Lanese also Chairs the City of Oakland’s Cannabis Regulatory Commission. Under Lanese’s leadership the city of Oakland has the most comprehensive equity program to date in the country.

CHRIS MICHALAKIS

Chris Michalakis has served multiple roles at the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, currently serving as a Federal Legislative Representative. He has previously served as President of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO, and as UFCW Michigan’s Legislative and Political Director.

JAY MILLS

Jamila Hogan, publicly known as Jay Mills, was the first Black woman to manage a cultivation center on the east coast. Her passion for plant medicine led to the creation of the Green Life Learning Center in 2016, and self publishing a series of cannabis reference manuals. She is a DC native who ran for public office in 2018 and is well known for community organizing and political action. After successfully managing first a cultivation center then a dispensary, she currently devotes her full attention to hemp agroecology education and consultation services provided by The Green Life Learning Center.

CAT Packer

Cat Packer is the first Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cannabis Regulation. Appointed by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2017, Packer has established the City’s commercial cannabis licensing and regulatory program and Social Equity Program and is responsible for advising and managing the City’s cannabis-related goals and priorities. Prior to joining the City of Los Angeles, Packer served as California Policy Coordinator for the Drug Policy Alliance, where she worked to ensure the successful and equitable implementation of various cannabis policy reforms. Packer is an alumna of The Ohio State University where she received a Bachelor’s in Political Science, a Master’s in Public Policy & Management and a Juris Doctor.

SHANITA PENNY

Shanita Penny, MBA is a cannabis advocate, strategist and entrepreneur with over 15 years of experience helping world class companies and startups solve complex issues and improve business performance across multiple industries. As founder and principal of Budding Solutions, a boutique cannabis business strategy and policy advisory consulting firm, she continues to positively impact the legalization movement, burgeoning cannabis industry and the greater community. Shanita is a former president of the Minority Cannabis Business Association and recently completed her first term as a member of the Michigan Marijuana Regulatory Authority’s Racial Equity Advisory Workgroup. Ms. Penny has provided testimony on equitable cannabis legalization in cities and states throughout the country and testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Committee for a hearing to examine the role of small businesses in the cannabis industry.
**Tabatha Robinson**
Tabatha Robinson is a 2020 graduate of Harvard University’s joint JD/MBA Program. She is a special assistant attorney general at a state attorney general’s office and a policy advisor to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. She has also served as a strategy and operations consultant to startups in emerging sectors. Her cannabis-related work relates primarily to the legacy market and social equity programs. During her time in law school, she was the Summer Associate in Asset Management for Ropes and Gray LLP.

**Cynthia W. Roseberry**
Cynthia W. Roseberry is the deputy director of policy at the ACLU’s Justice Division, where she focuses on criminal justice reform. Prior to joining the ACLU, she was a member of the Charles Colson Task Force, a bipartisan, blue-ribbon task force commissioned to examine over-incarceration and make recommendations to the President, Attorney General, and Congress.

During the Obama administration, Ms. Roseberry was the project manager of the Clemency Project 2014, which provided pro bono support to the more than 36,000 applicants for presidential clemency.

**Justin Strekal**
Justin Strekal is the Political Director for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, or NORML, where he serves as an advocate to end the federal prohibition of marijuana and to reform our nation’s laws to no longer unduly discriminate against its consumers in various aspects of their lives.

Prior to working on drug policy, he focused on tax, wage, and campaign finance reform as well as managed electoral campaigns throughout the country for positions in various levels of government.

**Shaleen Title**
Shaleen Title is an attorney and drug policy activist who currently serves as vice-chair of the Cannabis Regulators of Color Coalition. From 2017 to 2020, she was an inaugural commissioner of the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission, the agency tasked with regulating legal marijuana. She has consulted on state and local cannabis policy around the country and was previously a partner at THC Staffing Group, a boutique cannabis recruiting firm. She holds a law degree and graduate degree in accounting from the University of Illinois.

**Tamar Todd**
Tamar Todd works on legislative drafting, statewide political campaign strategy, regulatory implementation, and non-profit management in the areas of drug law reform, marijuana law and policy, public health, and criminal justice. She currently teaches marijuana law at Berkeley Law and drug law and policy at UC Davis School of Law. She also serves on the California Cannabis Advisory Committee, which advises the California Bureau of Cannabis Control on the implementation of California’s marijuana legalization law. Todd is the former legal director of the Drug Policy Alliance where she continues to work as a consultant.