

Principles for Federal Cannabis Regulations & Reform

Federal cannabis regulations should be grounded in the following core principles:

DIGNITY

People who produce, process, distribute, sell, and consume cannabis are deserving of compassion, respect, opportunity, and inclusion as full members of society, as are medical professionals who counsel, recommend, or authorize medical cannabis use.

RACIAL JUSTICE

The end of federal cannabis prohibition must focus on undoing the laws, systems, and institutions that were designed to oppress, imprison, and dehumanize Black people and target and harm Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities of color. New laws and regulations must focus on repairing the harm to individuals, families, and communities caused by past and present laws, and to protect against future harm.

EQUITY

The laws and policies that replace federal cannabis prohibition must not discriminate against, disproportionately impact, oppress, or stigmatize targeted or marginalized groups of people in the name of combating drug sales or drug use. The new laws and regulations must provide for equitable opportunity and equitable access to resources throughout the industry's supply chain.

MEDICAL CANNABIS

People, including minors, should have the right to access services to maintain or improve physical and mental health, including meaningful access to medical professionals for proper assessment and treatment, and access to prescription pharmaceutical cannabinoid drugs and non-prescription cannabis and cannabinoid products for medical use that are affordable and accessible. Medical professionals should be protected against investigation or disciplinary action for the lawful authorization and management of medical cannabis use when they are observing standards of medical care guided by science and clinical experience. Education and training on medical cannabis should be available and accessible to health and medical professionals.

PUBLIC HEALTH & EDUCATION

Predatory commercialization and marketing should be restricted. People should have access to accurate and holistic information related to medical access, harm reduction, and safe use as well as access to safe, regulated products for both medical and personal use.

MINORS

Access by minors to cannabis for personal use should be restricted. Minors should not be subject to targeted marketing or advertising. They deserve accurate information about cannabis. Access to medical cannabis under state law programs for minors should be protected. Minors should not face criminal sanctions or monetary fines for cannabis activity but should instead be offered intervention, counseling, and other services, as needed.

JUSTICE REFORM & ELIMINATION OF LIFE-LONG CONSEQUENCES

People should not be criminalized, sanctioned, excluded from society, or otherwise punished for cannabis. Criminal penalties, civil penalties, life-long punitive consequences, and barriers resulting from a criminal record should be eliminated. People should be resentenced and prior arrests and convictions expunged. Noncitizens should not be sanctioned or penalized.

JUST AND EQUITABLE OWNERSHIP

Small and local businesses, social equity programs, and alternative ownership models, such as cooperatives, should be protected and encouraged. Participation by large corporations and corporate capitalism should be limited, controlled, and subject to the most robust regulation.

REVENUE

All tax or other government revenues generated by the regulated market should be invested in communities to repair the harms of cannabis prohibition, encourage a just and equitable cannabis industry, provide equitable access to resources, and to prevent future harms. No revenue derived from the regulated market should be allocated to law enforcement or policing.

WORKFORCE

Investment should be made to create and fund educational and training opportunities including federally recognized apprenticeship programs to generate high skilled, well-compensated jobs that bring employment opportunity and resources to individuals, families, and communities most harmed by past and present drug laws. People working in all levels of the cannabis industry deserve strong worker protections and high labor standards free from misclassification as independent contractors or agricultural workers. Workplaces should also be subject to the highest level of occupational health and safety standards erring on the side of protecting workers. Standards and regulations should be updated regularly as new research emerges on these best practices.

NON-COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY/ HOME CULTIVATION

The non-commercial growing and sharing of cannabis should be protected and not subject to taxation.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental factors such as air quality, carbon emissions, soil quality, and runoff impact should be taken into consideration. Standards and regulation should be put in place to prevent and mitigate harm.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Barriers to cannabis research should be removed and rigorous, unbiased, culturally informed research should be thoroughly funded to investigate and evaluate both the potential health benefits and risks of cannabis and the public health outcomes of each policy approach. People should have equitable access to accurate, unbiased information as to the benefits and risks of cannabis.

STATE PROGRAMS

Federal reform should build upon and expand existing state medical and adult use programs and neither create nor fund new barriers, restrictions, or civil or criminal penalties.

UN TREATIES

The United States should take the position that cannabis be removed from scheduling under the UN drug treaties.



American Civil Liberties Union • Association for Cannabis Health Equity and Medicine (ACHEM) • Budding Solutions • Doctors for Cannabis Regulation • Drug Policy Alliance • The Green Life Learning Center • The Hood Incubator • Root and Rebound Reentry Advocates • Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) • Veterans Cannabis Coalition • Village • Viola

Christopher Alexander • Dr. Daniel Bear • Cristina Buccola, esq. • Dasheeda Dawson • Tabatha Robinson • Shaleen Title • Cat Packer