

August 10, 2020

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
235 Cannon HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer  
H-107 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer,

As researchers, academics, clinicians, and public health organizations, we publicly endorse the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment & Expungement (MORE) Act of 2019 (H.R. 3884), and ask that Members of Congress prioritize and swiftly move this critical piece of legislation to the House floor for a vote in September. **We believe that the responsible regulation and control of marijuana will be more beneficial to society and the public's health than prohibiting and criminalizing it.**

Ending federal prohibition of marijuana is an opportunity to:

- Reduce the public health harms of criminalization;
- Reduce barriers and increase opportunities for research and medical advances; and
- Protect patients in states with medical and adult access from federal interference.

**The MORE will reduce criminalization and associated risks to health and wellbeing, particularly for communities of color.** In 2018, marijuana-related arrests were 40% of the 1.65 million drug-related arrests made in the United States. The majority of these marijuana-related arrests (92%) were for personal possession. Although marijuana arrests do not always result in incarceration, police contact, arrests, and drug convictions can carry significant collateral consequences that can place health and [wellbeing at risk](#). Research suggests that police contact and arrest can be [harmful for the mental health](#) of surveilled and policed populations. Some harmful collateral consequences associated with drug convictions can include ineligibility for social services including public housing, restricted employment opportunities, ineligibility for federal financial aid, and denial of voting rights.

It is also worth noting that the harms of prohibitions have not been distributed equally. Despite similar rates of marijuana use among Black and white people, the odds of incarceration for marijuana possession are [3.6 times higher](#) for a Black person than a white person. The consequences of incarceration – separation from family, loss of economic opportunity, disenfranchisement, and social stigma, among many others – only exacerbate the already profound effects of incarceration on health and wellbeing. Any system that perpetuates inequities such as this are inherently unjust and unhealthy – inequities lead to disparities in access to health care, resources, and support, which in turn is a [major indicator](#) of poor health outcomes.

**The MORE Act will expand opportunities for scientific research on health effects and medical uses.** Researchers face a number of barriers to conducting research on marijuana due to its Schedule I status. Researchers must receive special permissions from the federal government, outfit their laboratories with heightened safety measures, and face deeper scrutiny on their protocols and research methods. Scientific studies of marijuana and other scheduled substances cost more, take longer, and require more administration and oversight than studies of other substances. Due to marijuana's federally illicit status, researchers also continue to be impacted by the lack of consumer-grade products to conduct research with.

While studies have demonstrated potential for marijuana as a treatment for chronic pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, seizures, and multiple-sclerosis spasticity, there are other potential under-explored medical and therapeutic uses. Some research suggests that marijuana may be a helpful adjunct or substitute for prescription opioid medications and more research could explore whether expanded access could help to reduce the risk of opioid overdose death. Removing marijuana from its restrictive Schedule I classification would open the door for greater and deeper understanding of its properties, and more access for qualifying patients.

**The MORE Act will protect states with legal medical and adult access from federal interference.** Under the MORE Act, states will no longer fear interference from the federal government. Medical marijuana patients and adults purchasing marijuana in their states' regulated markets are currently at risk of losing access if the federal government were to interfere in these state policies. Allowing individual states to undergo their own democratic policymaking process will ensure that policies match the needs and will of that state's people – without fear of the federal government.

The MORE Act provides a clear path forward that rights the wrongs of prohibition. We ask that Members of Congress support this important legislation and ensure that it is swiftly marked up and voted out of the House in September.

Sincerely,

**Organizations**

Blue Sage Health Consulting  
Center for Effective Regulatory Policy and Safe Access (CERPSA)  
Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation  
Chicago Recovery Alliance  
College & Community Fellowship  
From Prison Cells to PhD  
Harm Reduction Ohio- Dayton and Montgomery County Branches  
Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University School of Law  
Health Professionals in Recovery  
Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies  
NATION4CHANGE

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence- Maryland Chapter  
Nicotine Harm Reduction Consultants  
Operation Restoration  
Peer Network of New York  
Truth Pharm Inc.

**Individuals**

Brian Adams  
Cleveland, OH

Julie Barron, MA  
Ann Arbor, MI

Stephanie Bazell, esq  
New York, NY

Samantha Blakemore, MPH  
Weymouth, MA

JaCoby Blass  
DeKalb, Mississippi

Carolyn Bloom, CADC  
Chicago, IL

Elizabeth Bowen, PhD  
Oak Park, IL

Alexandra Bradley, MPH  
Washington, DC

Jeffrey Bratberg, PharmD, FAPhA  
Attleboro, MA

Elizabeth Brewington  
Raleigh, NC

Chris Bustamante, MS, RN  
New York, NY

Nancy D Campbell, PhD  
Troy, NY

Jennifer J. Carroll, PhD, MPH  
Durham, NC

Antoinette Charles, BS, MD Candidate  
Durham, NC

Seth Clark MD, MPH  
Providence, RI

Chalaina Connors, MA, LPC  
Portland, OR

Tori Cowger, MPH  
Boston, MA

Joanne Csete, PhD, MPH  
New York, NY

Chinazo Cunningham, MD, MS  
Brooklyn, NY

Alexandra Duello, MPH  
Saint Louis, MO

Jessie Dunleavy, MLS  
Annapolis, MD

Michael Dunn, MSW, LMSW  
Brooklyn, NY

Mitchell Earleywine, PhD  
Slingerlands, NY

Michael Erwin, LCSW, CASAC-T  
Rosendale, NY

Madelyne Estevez, MSW  
New York, NY

Nuha Fariha, MD Candidate  
Aldan, PA

Katherine Fisher MSN, RN

Brooklyn, NY

Kassandra Frederique, MSW  
New York, NY

Patricia Frye, MD  
Washington, DC

Julia Anna Gasior, MD Candidate  
Philadelphia, PA

Bryn Gay, MA  
New York, NY

Sandy Gibson, PhD, LCSW, LCADC  
Ewing, NJ

Jonathan Giftos, MD, AAHIVS  
Brooklyn, NY

Natalie Lyla Ginsberg, MSW  
Los Angeles, CA

Tamara Goldsby, PhD  
Fallbrook, CA

Jeremiah Goulka, JD  
Washington, DC

Rebecca Half, LMSW  
Brooklyn, NY

Caroline Hartridge, DO  
Brooklyn, NY

Tracey Helton, MPA  
Daly City, CA

Cynthia Hoffman LMFT, MA  
San Francisco, CA

Sheila A. Humphrey  
Dayton, OH

Sloka Iyengar, PhD  
New York, NY

Danielle Jackson, MD, MPH  
Chicago, IL

Sterling Johnson JD, MA  
Philadelphia, PA

Ayana Jordan, MD, PhD  
New Haven, CT

Deborah Kaye  
Israel

William C. Kinkle RN, EMT-P, CRS  
Willow Grove, PA

Elizabeth Kinnard, MS, PhD Candidate  
Berkeley, CA

James Kowalsky, AM, MSW  
Chicago, IL

Alex H. Kral, PhD  
San Francisco, CA

Alexander Kravitz, PharmD  
Hershey, PA

Carly Larson  
Denver, CO

Carly M. Lesoski, PhD  
Detroit, MI

Barry Lessin, M.Ed., CAADC  
Blue Bell, PA

Isabelle Leventhal, MA  
Brooklyn, NY

Beth S. Linas, MHS, PhD  
Washington, DC

Teresa Lopez-Castro, PhD  
New York, NY

Nazlee Maghsoudi, MGA, BComm, PhD Candidate  
Toronto, Canada

Olivia Marcus  
Storrs, CT

Anna Martin, MPH(c)  
Philadelphia, PA

Ryan McNeil, PhD  
New Haven, CT

William J. Moner, PhD  
Elon, NC

David L. Nathan, MD, DFAPA  
Princeton, NJ

J Gary Nelson MAPC, LPC  
Payson, AZ

Nolan Nelson, MSSW  
Louisville, KY

Rhonda Nesbitt, RN, HN-BC, HWNC-BC  
Clarkston, MI

Jules Netherland, PhD, MSW  
New York, NY

Thea Oliphant-Wells, MSW  
Federal Way, WA

Neil Olson, MA  
Danville, IL

Danielle Ompad, PhD

New York, NY

Meghan Peterson, MPH  
New York, NY

Annie Phoenix, PhD(c)  
New Orleans, LA

Kieran Pierre, LMHC  
Bronx, NY

Alexis Pleus  
Binghamton, NY

Kelsey Priest, PhD, MPH  
Portland, OR

Brad Ray, PhD  
Detroit, MI

Helen Redmond, LCSW  
New York, NY

Amanda Reiman, PhD, MSW  
Ukiah, CA

Craig Reinerman, PhD  
Santa Cruz, CA

Garrett Reuscher, CASAC, MSW Candidate  
Brooklyn, NY

Marilyn Reyes  
Bronx, NY

Emma Richard, MPH  
Bronx, NY

Ivy A. Rosado, MSW  
New York, NY

Nancy Rosen-Cohen, PhD  
Baltimore, MD



Taylor Sabol, BS  
Philadelphia, PA

Jamie Salley, MA  
Maryville, TN

Sally Sanders, RN, SMART Recovery facilitator  
Laguna Beach, CA

Corey Snelson, PhD, MPH  
Seattle, WA

Tim Stephanos, LCSW  
Roseburg, OR

Tiffany Sparks MT, MB(ASCP)  
McDermott, OH

Winifred Tate, PhD  
Waterville, ME

Carla Thomas, PhD  
Philadelphia, PA

Tarlise Townsend, BS, PhD Candidate  
New York, NY

Sheila P Vakharia, PhD, MSW  
Brooklyn, NY

Grant Victor PhD, MSW  
Detroit, MI

Karla Wagner, PhD  
Reno, Nevada

Ingrid Walker, PhD  
Tacoma, WA

Dawn A. Weisenberger, LCSW  
Fredericksburg, VA

Brandie Wilson, MA  
Chicago, IL

Brett Wolfson-Stofko, PhD  
Toronto, Canada

Alexander Wood, MD, MPH  
Gainesville, FL

Toddchelle Young, MPH  
Maryland, USA

Stephen Ziegler, PhD, JD  
Denver, CO