

Cannabis Crime Resolution

Co-Authors:

Lukas Barfield, Director of the Medical Marijuana Coalition of Washington State
(Masters of Education -- University of Washington Tacoma)

Suzanne Skaar
(Master of Arts - Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington Seattle)

Endorsed by:

28th Legislative District Democrats

29th Legislative District Democrats

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Whereas, the 2016 Democratic platform passed by the Democratic Central Committee on July 8, 2016, in addition to endorsing numerous other cannabis reforms, states: "[W]e recognize current marijuana laws have had an unacceptable disparate impact, with arrest rates for marijuana possession among African-Americans far outstripping arrest rates among whites despite similar usage rates."

Whereas, the drug war, specifically the war on cannabis, has been especially devastating to families and communities of color as African-Americans are 3.73 more times likely to be arrested for marijuana than whites¹ despite U.S. government studies showing a lower use rate among Blacks than whites²;

Whereas the ACLU has stated that 52% of all drug arrests in the US in 2010 were for marijuana³;

Whereas in 2015, U.S. "marijuana arrests were about 13.6 percent more than the 505,681 arrests made for all violent crimes, including murder, rape and serious assaults"⁴, and in Washington State alone, 241,039 arrests for marijuana possession were made from 1986-2010⁵;

Whereas, even after release from jail and serving their time, individuals with arrest records for a substance that is now legal face barriers to employment and housing;

Whereas, due to their inability to find employment, the families of those convicted of cannabis crimes also struggle;

Whereas, in recent years criminal penalties for cannabis possession, processing, and growing infractions have been considerably lessened;

Therefore may it be resolved that before leaving office in 2020, Governor Jay Inslee expunge all cannabis convictions that would not have occurred under the legal regulatory framework that exist at that time;

Therefore may it be resolved that the Washington State Legislature pass a bill which outlines a process whereby individuals may expunge their record of more serious cannabis-related convictions such as larger possession amounts or cultivation;

Therefore may it be finally resolved that the Washington State Legislature pass a bill that outlines a process by which individuals in prison for cannabis-related convictions may petition a judge for a reduction of sentence and release.

¹ ACLU. "Marijuana Arrests by the Numbers." <https://www.aclu.org/gallery/marijuana-arrests-numbers>

² Harry G. Levine, Jon B. Gettman, Loren Siegel. "Targeting Blacks for Marijuana: Possession Arrests of African Americans in California, 2004-08." Drug Policy Alliance, LA: June 2010.

http://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/Targeting_Blacks_for_Marijuana_06_29_10.pdf pp 4-5.

³ ACLU.

⁴ "Marijuana Arrests Outnumber Those for Violent Crime, Study Finds." Williams, Timothy. The New York Times. 10/12/2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/13/us/marijuana-arrests.html>

⁵ Harry G. Levine, PhD, Sociology Department, Queens College, City University of New York; Jon B. Gettman, PhD, Criminal Justice Program, Shenandoah University, Winchester, VA; Loren Siegel, JD, LS Consulting, Brooklyn, NY. "240,000 Marijuana Arrests: Costs, Consequences, and Racial Disparities of Possession Arrests in Washington, 1986 – 2010." October 2012. <http://www.marijuana-arrests.com/docs/240,000-Marijuana-Arrests-In-Washington.pdf> p. 4.