August 10, 2020

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer  
235 Cannon HOB  
H-107 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
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 Halff, 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 Reinarman, 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