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LD 1320

I am writing in opposition to LD 1320. While individuals with convictions related to illicit, non-cannabis drugs should not be permitted to participate in the cannabis program, those with non-violent cannabis offenses should not be excluded from this stipulation. In fact, many states have taken steps to prioritize these individuals in their cannabis licensing processes.

For example, in New York, officials have announced that the first 100 or more retail cannabis licenses will be reserved for individuals—or their family members—who have been convicted of marijuana-related offenses. This policy, introduced by Governor Kathy Hochul, is part of a broader effort to ensure that the earliest cannabis business opportunities are extended to communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.

This approach recognizes the long-standing harm caused by cannabis prohibition and seeks to offset the barriers to employment and entrepreneurship that individuals with non-violent cannabis convictions often face. Expanding access to the cannabis industry for these individuals promotes job creation, higher wages, and greater economic security for communities that have historically borne the brunt of cannabis criminalization.

<https://nypost.com/2022/11/21/new-york-issues-first-recreational-weed-licenses-to-ex-convicts-families/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/09/nyregion/marijuana-sellers-licenses-hochul.htm>