



August 3, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States

Dear President Trump:

In a recent Tweet, you stated that you were, “actively getting our great and beautiful Country out of the ridiculous and costly Endless Wars.”

We at the Marijuana Policy Project would like to ask that you get us out of the ridiculous and costly Endless Drug War as well. The drug war is one that has cost more lives than all other wars combined, and is one that, like the other endless wars, you inherited, and one you have the ability to end. This is not your drug war, and many administrations have come and gone before you, simply making it worse. But it *will* be yours if you don’t take action to end the senseless waste of lives and money. As your first term comes to a close, whether or not you take action, this endless drug war becomes yours too.

As a candidate in the primary, you once debated a FOX News host regarding medical marijuana and said, “I am in favor of it 100%.” You said you knew sick people who use marijuana for medical purposes and that, “it really does help them.” We knew then that you were sympathetic to patients and to our cause.

As president, you supported and advocated for criminal justice reform and signed the First Step Act. Ending the drug war is a consistent position. Your statements in support of Senator Gardner’s STATES Act ([S. 1028](#) and [H.R. 2093](#)) and your support for states’ rights make ending the drug war a logical next step.

And since the majority of Democratic, Republican, and independent voters agree, ending federal prohibition is both good policy AND good politics.

While Congress is on their August recess this year, 50,000 people will be arrested for marijuana possession. Some of them, like the patients you know and support, will be using it for medical purposes. Being sympathetic won't keep them from getting in trouble, but as president, your actions will. Here are MPP’s top five suggestions for what

you can do to correct the failures of the previous administrations and finally draw down this failed, endless, civil war.

1. Request that Congress immediately remove cannabis and cannabis products from the Controlled Substances Act ([H.R. 1588](#)). Cannabis should be treated like tobacco or alcohol, not uranium.
2. Pardon all federal, nonviolent marijuana offenders, and champion the removal of cannabis convictions from criminal histories. This unfair system limits businesses that want to hire workers, and it limits our opportunities as a country during an important time of economic recovery.
3. Call on Congress to remove federal barriers to these “essential” state businesses. Cannabis businesses should not be treated any differently than other industries — like tobacco and alcohol. They need access to financial services (the SAFE Banking Act, [S. 1200](#) and [H.R. 1595](#)) and equal tax treatment via 280E reform ([S. 422](#) and [H.R. 1118](#)). The revenue, jobs, and economic activity around this industry is critical during this time of economic recovery.
4. Issue an executive order instructing federal agencies to ensure that patients can get access to life-saving treatments no matter where they live. Whether a person gets the doctor-recommended treatment they need should not be based on their ZIP code.
5. Issue an executive order to the DEA, FDA, and NIDA to expedite research into cannabis, and stop allowing other countries like China to take the lead when it comes to understanding the full potential of cannabis. There are products available both from hemp and from marijuana — from textiles to medicine. We should unlock that research both in industry and in our universities. Our patients and our veterans deserve no less.


We do not support the harm that has occurred during the recent demonstrations, but we also can't deny that much of the hopelessness we see is tied to poor living conditions, lack of jobs, and a future that has been stunted because of criminal records received for nothing more than the possession of a plant. This is a very popular plant, your supporters are in favor of legalization, and you could open up a new world of opportunity to change lives.

There has never been a more perfect time to do it than now. All of the bills noted in this letter have bipartisan support.

Marijuana is not the problem; enforcement of marijuana prohibition is the problem. This is just like alcohol prohibition, and just like then, the best solution is to allow the product but control it. Let law enforcement focus its limited resources on real crime. Let our people provide for their families without the need for government subsidies because they can't get a job commensurate with their skills. And let patients follow their doctors' orders without fear of arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.

Do it now because it's the right thing to do and now is the right time to do it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Hawkins". The word "Steve" is written in a cursive script, and "Hawkins" is written in a more stylized, slightly larger cursive font.

Steven Hawkins  
Executive Director  
Marijuana Policy Project