

MISSION [GREEN]

THE WELDON PROJECT

November 24, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW.
Washington, D.C. 20500

RE: Clemency for Non-Violent Cannabis Offenders

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of cannabis offenders serving federal prison sentences, their loved ones, and supporters across the country, we strongly urge you to immediately begin the process of granting clemency to those serving federal time for non-violent cannabis-related offenses.

The undersigned—musicians, actors, filmmakers, cannabis industry entrepreneurs, current and former elected and appointed government officials, law enforcement organizations, journalists, authors, advocates, and business leaders strongly believe that justice necessitates the exercise of executive clemency in these cases.¹ Our nation’s view of cannabis has evolved, and it is indefensible to incarcerate citizens based on the unduly harsh attitudes of past generations.

You have expressed support for the States’ right to implement their own cannabis laws, especially for medicinal purposes.² And while there are a number of proposals being introduced in Congress to finally put an end to cannabis prohibition, they tend to lack any real avenue of relief for those who are serving time for selling cannabis. Given the timidity of this proposed

¹ The undersigned is comprised of prominent individuals from the entertainment & cannabis industries, as well as current and former elected and appointed government officials, law enforcement organizations, political figures, journalists, and business leaders.

² In speaking in support of Senator Cory Gardner’s bill STATES Act, which allows States to implement their own marijuana laws, you stated: “We’re looking at it. But I probably will end up supporting that, yes.” Eillen Sullivan, *Trump Says He’s Likely to Back Marijuana Bill, in Apparent Break with Sessions*, The New York Times, Jan. 8, 2018. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/08/us/politics/trump-marijuana-bill-states.html>

legislation, the gridlock in Congress, and the imperative of freedom, clemency is the right tool to fix this problem.

The stories of those you would help are compelling. For instance, Luke Scarmazzo owned and operated a *medical* cannabis dispensary in Modesto, California with his friend Ricardo Montes from 2004-2006 pursuant to California's Compassionate Use Act of 1996.³ Although there were other medical marijuana dispensaries operating throughout the state of California at that time, Luke and Ricardo were prosecuted in federal court, and in 2008 were sentenced to over 20 years of imprisonment because cannabis was (and still is) illegal under federal law.⁴ In January 19, 2017, after serving 9 years, Ricardo had his sentence commuted by President Obama.⁵ Luke wasn't as fortunate. Without explanation, his petition for commutation was denied.⁶ That form of random-selection clemency needs to be replaced with a principled, active, and meaningful program that better fits modern America.

Luke was an entrepreneur, who followed state law and fulfilled a market for medical marijuana. You and you alone have the power to call out a grand hypocrisy of prior administrations. While cannabis became a thriving, legal market and enriched many, your predecessors ignored the people who were—and are—serving long federal terms for doing the same thing.

We respectfully urge you to begin the process of identifying and granting clemency to those serving federal time for cannabis offenses, particularly those who were prosecuted in states where cannabis is now legal. We stand by to help in any way possible and have attached a list of cases we find compelling for your review.

Sincerely,

Weldon Angelos

Former Music Producer; (credits include production on Snoop Dogg's *We From The LBC* Album); Criminal Justice Reform Advocate; President, The Weldon Project

Kevin Garnett

15-time NBA All-Star & NBA Champion

³ See Compassionate Use Act of 1996.

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=11362.5.&lawCode=HSC

⁴ See *Luke Scarmazzo: Injustice Episode 4* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sPUiNtrvR8>)

⁵ Peter Hecht, *At last minute, Obama commutes prison sentence of Modesto pot dispensary operator*, The Sacramento Bee, Jan. 17, 2017. See <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/california-weed/article127594439.html>

⁶ See <https://www.candoclemency.com/clemency-luke-scarmazzo/>

Alice Johnson

Author; Public Speaker; Advocate; President Trump Clemency Recipient

Danny Trejo

Actor, Activist, Entrepreneur

Jason Flom

Founder & CEO of Lava Records; Former CEO of Virgin Records; Former Chairman & CEO of Atlantic Records; Former Chairman & CEO of Capitol Music Group

Mark Holden

Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Koch Industries

Mark Osler

Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas; Clemency Expert; Founder of the Nation's First Clemency Clinic

Baby Bash

Grammy-Nominated Recording Artist

Gary Johnson

29th governor of New Mexico from 1995 to 2003 (Republican), Libertarian Party nominee for President of the United States (2012 & 2016)

Jeremy Meeks

Fashion Model

Louis Lombardi

Actor (credits include roles in *Sopranos*, Fox's TV Series *24*, *Natural Born Killers*)

Dante Thomas

Platinum-selling Recording Artist (credits include international hit single "Miss California" featuring Pras)

Brad Furman

Director, Producer, Writer (credits include Matthew McConaughey's movie *Lincoln Lawyer* (2011), *The Infiltrator* (2016), *Justin Bieber: What Do You Mean?*)

Barry Grissom

U.S. Attorney for the District of Kansas (2010-2016); Former Member of Attorney General's Advisory Committee

Kellen O'Keefe

Chief Strategy Officer, Flower One

LEAP

Law Enforcement Action Partnership

Jason Beck

Vice President, Global Alliance for Cannabis Commerce; Founder & Owner of Alternative Herbal Health Services; Reform Advocate

Randal Meyer

Executive Director, Global Alliance for Cannabis Commerce; Former Legislative Counsel for Senator Rand Paul (R-KY)

Jessica Jackson

Former Mayor of Mill Valley; Co-Founder of #cut50

Amy Povah

Founder of CAN-DO Clemency (Provided List of Cases)

Angela Stanton King

American King Foundation

Michael “Big Hollis” Goldstein

Co-Founder of MISSION [GREEN]; Music Producer; Filmmaker (credits include Matthew McConaughey’s movie *Lincoln Lawyer*)

Marc Levin

Emmy-Award Winning Filmmaker

Napoleon

Former Member of 2Pac’s Recording Group (appeared on over 60 million record sales worldwide, including *Me Against the World*, *All Eyez on Me*, *Makaveli*, & *Still I Rise*)

Cliff Maloney

President, Young Americans for Liberty

Prof. Marc M. Howard

Professor of Government and Law, Georgetown University; Director of the Prisons and Justice Initiative

Connor Boyack

President, Libertas Institute

Jasper Logan

President of the Northwest Missouri State University College Republicans

Jason Vaughn

Founder of Pro-Life Texas & Texas Young Republican Policy Director

John Anthony Castro, J.D., LL.M.,

Castro & Co.; Republican candidate for United States Senate (Texas)

David Woody

Republican County Clerk for Clinton County, Missouri; Candidate for Missouri State House District 8

#cut50

Criminal Justice Reform Organization Founded by Van Jones – Committed to Cutting Federal Prison Population By 50%.

Mike Franco

President, Republican Liberty Caucus (Missouri)

Police Chief Christopher Hammann

New Haven Police Department (Missouri)

Camellia Plosser,

Republican Liberty Caucus Great Plains Regional Director

Willie Dove

Kansas State Representative (R-Bonner Springs) (2013-present)

Larisa E. Bolivar, M.A.

Founder/CEO, Bolivar Hemp Company; Founder/Executive Director, Cannabis Consumers Coalition (Denver)

Professor Kyle Dennis

(Communication) & Director of Debate, William Jewell University

Austin Peterson

KWOS Morning Show Host

Ron Hicks

Missouri State Representative R-102 (2019-present)

Jennifer Bukowsky

2016 RNC Trump Delegate, Missouri Supreme Court's Task Force on Criminal Justice, on the Board of Directors of the Show-Me Institute, and on the Steering Committee of the Federalist Society–Jefferson City Lawyers Chapter.

Bryan Spencer

Missouri State Representative, R-63 (2013-present)

Courtney Curtis

Missouri State Representative D-73 (2012-2018)

Jamie Haase

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Eric Brakey

Maine State Senator (R-20)

Paul Curtman

Missouri State Representative (R-109) (2011-2018)

Steven Hawkins

Executive Director, Marijuana Policy Project

Ann Lee

Executive Director, Republicans Against Marijuana Prohibition

John Baucum

Political Director, Republicans Against Marijuana Prohibition (Texas)

** Affiliations provided for identification only*

List of Cases

[Luke Scarmazzo](#) has served 13 years in prison for medical. In 2008, Scarmazzo was sentenced to 22 years for operating a state-compliant medical cannabis dispensary in Modesto, CA. His co-defendant and business partner Ricardo Montes, who received a 20-year sentence for the same conduct, was granted clemency by President Obama in January 2017. Scarmazzo was not as fortunate and remains in prison despite California legalizing recreational marijuana in 2016.

[Michael Pelletier](#) has served 14 years of a LIFE sentence. He became a paraplegic at age 11 and his state of Maine legalized cannabis in 2016. He is 64 years old.

[Robert Evans](#) is a paraplegic who is currently serving LIFE in prison for a nonviolent drug offense, including for marijuana. He is also a Type II diabetic. In 2002, six years before he went to prison, Robert was involved in a serious accident and suffered a spinal cord injury which left him partially paralyzed without sensation in his lower body. His condition has seriously deteriorated since he went to prison in 2008. His predicament was showcased in a Washington Post article on the COVID-19 risk in prison.

[Corvain Cooper](#) has served 6 years of a LIFE sentence for marijuana.

[Diana Marquez](#) is on home confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic but still needs clemency. She's a first offender who has served 14 years on 30-year sentence for cannabis and she is 64 years old.

[Ricardo Rojas](#) has served 23 years of a LIFE sentence. He is currently 77 years old and confined to a wheelchair.

[Pedro Moreno](#) is a first offender who has served 23 years of a LIFE sentence. Moreno is 60 years old.

[Lance Gloor](#) is a first-time offender who has served over 4 years of a 10-year sentence for medical marijuana in the state of Washington. He is 41 years old.

[John Knock](#) is a first offender and who has served 23 years of a LIFE sentence for a nonviolent marijuana offense. He's 72 years old.

[Hector McGurk](#) has served 15 years of a LIFE sentence for a marijuana offense. He is 60 years old.

[Craig Cesal](#) is a first offender on home confinement due to COVID-19 and has served 16 years on LIFE sentence (later reduced to 30 years) for marijuana. He is 60 years old.

[Ferrell Scott](#) has served 13 years of a LIFE sentence. Mr. Scott is 57 years old.

[Andy Cox](#) has served 12 years of a LIFE sentence and has the longest sentence in the nation for growing marijuana. He is 56 years old.

[Way Long](#) is a 57-year-old Native American and first offender who has served 21 years of a 50-year sentence for marijuana.

[Ismael Lira](#) is a first offender served 17 years of a LIFE sentence. He is 43 years old.

[Michael Knight](#) has served 11 years of a 17-year sentence for marijuana.

[Jimmy Romans](#) has served 10 years on a 30-year sentence. He is currently 49 years old.

[Donald Fugitt](#) is a first-time offender who has served 6 years of a 17-year sentence

[Eric McCauley](#) has served 14 years of a 23-year sentence for marijuana. He is 38 years old.

[Gabriel Gomez](#) is serving a 30-year sentence for a marijuana offense. He is 43 years old.

Anthony DeJohn is serving a LIFE sentence for a marijuana offense. He is 46.

Edwin Rubis is serving a 40-year sentence for marijuana. He is 51 years old.

Michael Woods is serving a LIFE sentence for marijuana. He is 49 years old.

Raphael Hernandez-Carillo is serving a LIFE sentence for marijuana. He is currently 41 years old.