



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Commission on Civil Rights' Acting Executive Director Supports Gov Moore Pardoning Misdemeanor Cannabis Convictions

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore (D) signed an executive order Monday pardoning 175,000 misdemeanor cannabis-related convictions, forgiving low-level convictions for a drug that is now legal in Maryland for use by those over age 21. The pardons come almost two years after state voters approved a 2022 ballot referendum to allow possession and use of small amounts of cannabis by those over age 21.

"We cannot celebrate the benefits of legalization if we do not address the consequences of criminalization," Moore said. "That rollout (of legalization) must go hand in hand with pardoning past conduct, and Maryland is going to lead by example."

"The Maryland Commission of Civil Rights fully supports this bold action by Governor Moore," said Cleveland L. Horton II, Acting Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. "The enforcement of cannabis laws has not been colorblind; it's been unequal treatment under the law." According to a [racial equity impact note](#) for the 2022 cannabis referendum, Blacks were twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession as other groups in the state. Blacks accounted for 59% of those arrested for marijuana possession in 2020, compared to about 39% for whites. "This is a much needed action of addressing how the drug war has disproportionately harmed marginalized Black and brown communities," said Acting Executive Director Horton.

Those who want to check the status of their records can do so at [Maryland Case Search](#), the state judiciary's online repository for electronic court records, or by visiting the courthouse where the conviction occurred and speaking to a clerk.

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"Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination."

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