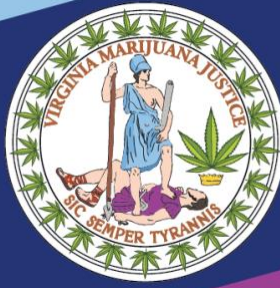


Virginia
Marijuana Justice

VAMJ



For Immediate Release
Thursday, September 16, 2021

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Virginia Marijuana Justice Wants Gov. Northam to Release Cannabis Prisoners

Group Releases Letter to Governor Same Day it Launches Clemency Call-a-Thon

VAMJ Marked First Day of Legalization by Handing out 20,000+ Cannabis Seeds

RICHMOND -- Virginia Marijuana Justice (VAMJ), the cannabis legalization group that handed out more than 20,000 seeds to thousands of Virginians around the state to mark the July 1 end of prohibition, is launching an effort to press Gov. Ralph Northam to release nonviolent cannabis "offenders" from prisons during the final months of his administration.

"We want to know when nonviolent cannabis 'offenders' will be released from prison," said Lennice Werth, co-founder of VAMJ. "Although we are very pleased to see that clemency for nonviolent cannabis 'offenders' has made it into the law, we still have not yet seen our friends return home. They should not have to suffer in jail, waiting and being punished like a criminal."

[In the letter sent Monday to Gov. Northam](#), the group thanked him for his important work reforming marijuana laws that, "for years, have hurt cannabis consumers and have torn families apart for a victimless and nonviolent act," but emphasized there is much more he must do right now.

The group wrote in its letter to Gov. Northam, "We do, of course, want to see the law go into full effect and for the entire community to benefit from your work. It is a significant part of your legacy as governor."

VAMJ is waiting to hear back from Gov. Northam, but in the meantime the group began an outreach effort aimed directly at Gov. Northam to drive home the point they intend to see this through. **From "High Noon to 4:20 PM" today (Thursday) VAMJ will call into Gov. Northam's office** to urge him to free the nonviolent incarcerated men and women, who never deserved to be behind bars in the first place. Future action to help persuade the governor to do the right thing is under consideration.

VAMJ is politely but adamantly insisting that Gov. Northam explain what his plan is for emptying the prisons of cannabis users, freeing them as well as the taxpayers of Virginia, who pay to house inmates that have not committed a crime under the new law.

Even President Biden announced this week that the federal government has begun the process of clemency for those prisoners of the failed drug war that were released to home confinement during the pandemic. There is no reason Gov. Northam can't do the same.

"Before we start making money off of legal marijuana, let's free our cannabis prisoners," said Michael Krawitz, co-founder of VAMJ and U.S. military veteran. "The ultimate insult is to be in prison for something that people on the outside are doing legally."

Krawitz noted, "Veterans use cannabis to deal with post-traumatic stress when they return home. Twenty-two veterans each day commit suicide from the stress. We ask that they please be released from prison, as promised, and allow them to heal."

VAMJ co-founder Werth added, "Minorities are disproportionately targeted by the propaganda-driven War on Drugs. Now is the time to release them from jail. Thousands of Virginians all around the state will celebrate to be reunited with men and women that are husbands and wives, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers and friends."

Cannabis has been legalized for home cultivation and possession in Virginia, and a clemency provision was written into the law to allow the release of nonviolent cannabis "offenders." Yet many good people of Virginia remain incarcerated.

"It's time to release nonviolent cannabis prisoners from the shackles of the failed and malevolent War on Drugs, and we must do the same for anyone that has been sent back to prison for simply testing positive for cannabis," Werth said.

VAMJ is urging its volunteers and supporters to reach out to President Biden and the Department of Justice to urge the federal government to speed up its timeline for clemency for nonviolent cannabis prisoners in federal lockups.

VAMJ volunteers and supporters plan to attend the National Mobilization to Legalize Cannabis, organized by flagship group District of Columbia Marijuana Justice (DCMJ), on Sept. 28 at the Russell Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill.

ABOUT DC MARIJUANA JUSTICE AND FOUNDING OF VAMJ

Since its founding in 2013, DCMJ has led the nation in creative and high-profile cannabis reform activism. After introducing and passing DC's Initiative 71 in 2014, which voters legalized the possession and cultivation of cannabis, DCMJ organized three large seed giveaways that provided all adults and Congressional staffers the means to grow cannabis for themselves, deployed giant 51-foot inflatable joints outside the Capitol, the White House, the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Times Square in New York City, the 2016 Presidential Debates, Annapolis Statehouse and Boston's Freedom Rally, as well as distributing over 10,000 joints of District of Columbia homegrown cannabis at the Inauguration of President Donald Trump, and attempting to distribute 1,227 joints at the congressional "Joint Session" in 2017, where U.S. Capitol Police unlawfully arrested seven DCMJ activists (All charges were dropped the following day). In 2021, DCMJ conceptualized and launched the "Joints for Jabs" coronavirus vaccination incentive program that was spontaneously adopted around the U.S., including by the State of Washington. DCMJ and sister group NYMJ gave away about 8,000 Joints on 4/20/21 in D.C. and NYC to adults with proof of vaccination. Also in 2021, VAMJ and DCMJ were behind The Great Commonwealth Cannabis Seed Share, collecting and distributing more than 20,000 donated seeds on the first day of legal home craft cultivation in Virginia. In 2018, 2019, and 2021, aligned organizations MDMJ, [VAMJ](#), COMJ, and NYMJ were formed to advocate for cannabis reform in Maryland, Virginia, Colorado, and New York. DCMJ demands cannabis be removed from the Controlled Substances Act and all Americans are given the right to grow cannabis in the safety and privacy of their homes.

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CANNABIS CLEMENCY CALL-A-THON



PARDON EVERYONE IN JAIL
FOR CANNABIS RELATED CRIMES



**THURSDAY, SEP. 16, 2021
HIGH NOON UNTIL 4:20PM**

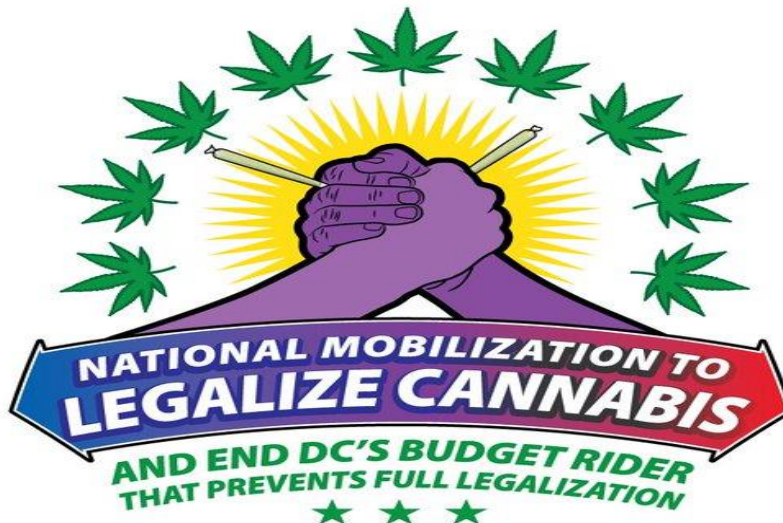
KEEP THEIR PHONES RINGING FOR 4 HOURS AND 20 MINUTES

**VA GOV. NORTHAM: 804-786-2211
PRESIDENT BIDEN: 202-456-1111
DEPT. OF JUSTICE: 202-353-1555**



 **VAMJ.ORG**

@VAMJ2019



Tues. Sept 28, 2021

**noon-4:20p Russell Senate
(1st & C Street NE) Office Building**

**DC rally with street theater,
peaceful direct action, and our
giant 51-foot joint. Rain or shine.**

RSVP:



DCMJ.ORG