

NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We write to you today to urge you to grant full pardons to Floridians with only a simple marijuana possession conviction. We also ask that you prioritize these pardons on the agenda of the December 14 hearing of the State Board of Executive Clemency. As public sentiment toward the War on Drugs has evolved, momentum builds across the U.S. toward bipartisan reforms, including the adoption of a constitutional amendment legalizing marijuana for medical use in 2016, passed with 71% approval of a small amount of marijuana in their possession.

According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida [arrested 20,765 and convicted 4,202 people in 2021](#) for marijuana possession, a 13% and 29% increase, respectively, from 2020.¹ Incarcerating these individuals costs state taxpayers around [\\$28,000](#) annually to detain one person in a Florida prison. People arrested for such a minor offense often suffer major consequences, including [up to a year of jail time and a \\$1,000 fine](#) for possessing only 20 grams or less. A conviction and accompanying criminal record bring challenges to securing gainful employment, education, and housing opportunities. While people of all races tend to use marijuana at the same rate, Black Floridians make up [56% of marijuana possession arrests](#) while only making up [17% of the state population](#).

A [2022 University of North Florida](#) poll found that 76% of Floridians supported legalizing marijuana including an impressive 64% approval rating among Republicans. Voters from both sides of the aisle also would like to see change on this issue, recognizing that we cannot incarcerate our way out of the Drug War. While reform has always polled well with Democrats and Independents, a [2021 Gallup poll](#) showed for the first time that 50% of Republicans are in favor of reconsidering our carceral approach to drug enforcement. Moreover, a [2020 Louis6G poll](#) info

measures that would further alleviate the harms of over-incarceration in Florida.
