



Contacts:

Paul Armentano, Deputy Director
paul@norml.org

Morgan Fox, Political Director
morgan@norml.org

Submitted to:

The House Oversight and Accountability Committee
Washington, DC
September 20, 2023

Testimony of Paul Armentano, Deputy Director:
National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws
in support of:

The Cannabis Users' Restoration of Eligibility (CURE) Act

My name is Paul Armentano and for the better part of the past three decades, I have worked professionally in the field of cannabis policy. I have authored several books on this topic, and my writing has been featured in over two-dozen academic anthologies. I have testified on these matters before numerous state legislatures and federal agencies and at various academic and legal symposiums. Last November, I testified¹ before members of the United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at a hearing entitled, "Developments in State Cannabis Laws and Bipartisan Cannabis Reforms at the Federal Level."

I currently serve as the Deputy Director for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). NORML is the nation's oldest and largest non-profit advocacy organization advocating on behalf of the interests of responsible adult cannabis consumers.

NORML believes that the advancement of the Cannabis Users' Restoration of Eligibility (CURE) Act will provide long overdue fairness in the federal hiring process – a process that for far too long has discriminated against otherwise hard-working Americans who responsibly consume cannabis while away from the job.

The majority of US states have legalized cannabis for either medical or adult-use, and tens of millions of Americans now consume cannabis responsibly in their off-hours in compliance with these state laws. Many states – including California, Connecticut, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, and Washington – have updated their workplace hiring practices to reflect this reality. These jurisdictions have not experienced any decrease in workplace productivity

¹ <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=115185>



or safety as a result of adopting these changes. By contrast, some states have seen greater labor participation² and a reduction in workplace absenteeism³ following legalization.

The federal government should follow suit and amend its hiring practices in a manner that reflects the fact that state-legal cannabis use is common-place and here to stay.

Americans should not be denied federal job opportunities or security clearances solely because of their private use of cannabis. Studies consistently show that employees who consume cannabis during their off-hours are no different than their peers.⁴ Their workplace performance does not differ from that of their coworkers,⁵ many of whom consume alcohol during their off-hours, and they do not pose any increased safety risk.⁶ According to an exhaustive review by the US National Academy of Sciences, **“There is no evidence to support a statistical association between cannabis use and occupational accidents or injuries.”**⁷ Another review of 16 occupational safety studies similarly affirmed, **“The current body of evidence does not provide sufficient evidence to support the position that cannabis users are at increased risk of occupational injury.”**⁸

Denying these tens of millions of Americans opportunities for federal employment is unduly punitive, discriminatory, and fails to serve the public interest. Passage of the CURE Act would correct this unjust policy. It will increase the talent pool of candidates eligible for federal employment, while recognizing the reality that those Americans who consume cannabis are responsible citizens who can positively contribute to the federal workforce.

For these reasons, I urge members of this Committee to act expeditiously to advance the Cannabis Users’ Restoration of Eligibility (CURE) Act.

² Dave et al., [The effect of recreational marijuana legalization on employment and earnings](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30813/w30813.pdf). National Bureau of Economic Research. 2022.

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30813/w30813.pdf

³ David Ullman. 2016. The effect of medical marijuana on sickness absence. *Health Economics*.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hec.3390>

⁴ See relevant citations and excerpts from the NORML Fact Sheet:

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/marijuana-legalization-and-impact-on-the-workplace/>

⁵ Bernerth et al., 2020. Altered states or much ado about nothing? A study of when cannabis is used in relation to the impact it has on performance. *Group and Organizational Management* 45.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1059601120917590>

⁶ Zhang et al., 2020. Cannabis use and work-related injuries: A cross sectional analysis. *Occupational Medicine* 70: 570-577

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7732753/>

⁷ US National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: [The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: Committee’s Conclusions](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/24625/Cannabis_committee_conclusions.pdf), 2017.

https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/24625/Cannabis_committee_conclusions.pdf

⁸ Biasutti et al., 2020. Systemic review of cannabis use and risk of occupational injury. *Substance Use and Misuse* 55: 1733-1745.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32441179/>