

**Congressman Eliot L. Engel**  
Statement for the Record  
Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Hearing  
“Cannabis Policies for the New Decade”  
January 10, 2020

Thank you Chairwoman Eshoo and Chairman Pallone for holding today’s important hearing on legislative proposals to modernize federal policies on cannabis.

As an advocate for legalizing cannabis, I have been supportive of state laws to legalize cannabis, including marijuana. As this sea change has occurred, federal laws have begun to catch up. In 2018, I served as a Conferee to the Agriculture Improvement Act, better known as the Farm Bill, which took a step forward in legalizing cannabis by allowing the cultivation of hemp. This past June, I voted for an appropriations amendment that would prohibit the Department of Justice from interfering in state cannabis programs, including those involving marijuana.

Many of the proposals under consideration today would help us move closer to the complete legalization of cannabis. The Marijuana Freedom and Opportunity Act, introduced by New York Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, would decriminalize marijuana and THC by removing it from the list of Schedule I substances. It would also provide states with the necessary resources to expunge marijuana convictions, which have had a disproportionate impact on minority communities. Congressman Jeffries’ legislation, which I have cosponsored, would provide commonsense reforms to our nation’s antiquated cannabis laws.

It is also critical that we streamline the federal process for medical research on cannabis. Currently, a number of regulatory and legal barriers dissuade promising research into cannabis. The bipartisan Medical Marijuana Research Act would alleviate many of these barriers and open the door into cannabis research.

I look forward to working with my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, on advancing cannabis policies that are in tune with this new decade.