



**TESTIMONY OF JANOS MARTON**

**NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF DREAM CORPS JUSTICE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME, TERRORISM, AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

**U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

**MARCH 11, 2021**

**“Controlled Substances: Federal Policies and Enforcement”**

Chair Jackson Lee, Vice Chair Bush, Ranking Member Biggs, and members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security regarding the federal government’s policies regarding controlled substances and enforcement. My name is Janos Marton, and I am the National Director of Dream Corps JUSTICE, an organization founded by Van Jones that seeks to advance bi-partisan policies which will close prison doors and open doors of opportunity, making our communities safer and more prosperous. I want to particularly acknowledge Vice Chair Bush as a former resident of St. Louis and strong supporter of the campaign to close the Workhouse.

Our nation’s history of mass incarceration is in large part the result of unjust policies and laws that disproportionately impact Black and brown communities, and there are few greater policy failures than the 50-year “War on Drugs.”. Legislation such as the bipartisan First Step Act and Fair Sentencing Act have attempted to deal with the consequences of discriminatory sentencing laws, but Congress and the federal government must do much more if they seek to rectify this issue. Specifically, Congress must pass legislation which substantially reforms this nation’s drug laws and enforcement policies, such as sentencing reforms that apply retroactively, reinvesting



money spent on over policing into community development, and banning unjust policing practices such as no-knock drug warrants.

Thankfully, numerous bills which have been introduced and will be introduced that address many of these issues. Legislation such as the Smarter Sentencing Act, Smarter Pretrial Detention for Drug Charges Act, the MORE Act, and other bi-partisan bills can have a substantial impact on drug policy and policing practices in America, and can help to undo decades of harmful and discriminatory policy which has divided communities and jeopardized public safety.

In addition, the Biden Administration should take concrete steps to create a more humane and scientifically based approach to federal drug policy enforcement, emphasizing access to drug counseling and community support programs, and minimizing unnecessary arrests and enforcement actions which contradict state and local drug laws. We are particularly heartened by the Office of National Drug Control Policy's recent groundbreaking call for using the lens of harm reduction as a guiding principle for its work.

America is undergoing a severe health, economic, and social crisis which predates and is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we seek to protect our neighbors from these various threats, we should also work to emphasize a more compassionate and medically-centered approach towards federal drug policy and enforcement. I thank you for the opportunity to advocate on behalf of Dream Corps JUSTICE's Empathy Network - directly impacted leaders from across the country who are calling for these desperately needed criminal justice and drug policy reforms for their communities to thrive. I would be happy to answer any additional inquiries the Subcommittee may have, and look forward to our continued engagement..

Janos Marton  
National Director  
Dream Corps JUSTICE