

Jessica Price
66 Little Plains Road
Huntington, NY 11743

February 21, 2021

The Honorable Liz Krueger
New York State Senate
172 State Street, Capitol Building
Room 416 CAP
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Helene E. Weinstein
New York State Assembly
LOB 923
Albany, NY 12248

RE: Marijuana Justice and the MRTA Bill - Written Testimony Prepared the Joint Legislative
Public Hearing on 2021 Executive Budget Proposal February 23, 2021

Chairs Krueger and Weinstein;

My name is Jessica Price, and I write to you in support of cannabis legalization in New York. I represent a coalition of like-minded people who are advocating for the passage of a proposal that centers equity, community reinvestment, removes criminal penalties, and repairs the past harms caused by the disastrous “War on Drugs.”

The criminalization of marijuana has devastated New York communities, burdened hundreds of thousands with criminal records and served as a justification for racially biased policing and prosecution. The opportunities for entire generations of New Yorkers, especially New Yorkers of color, have been unfair and unjust marijuana policies and policing.

[A report by Start SMART New York](#), shows the highest arrest rates for low-level marijuana offenses outside of New York City were on Long Island, where people of color were arrested and prosecuted at much greater frequencies than their white counterparts. In Suffolk county, where I live, Black and Latino people are 29 percent of the total population, yet they accounted for 66 percent of marijuana arrests in 2017. This is a clear example of racial injustice that must be corrected through the new legislation currently being considered.

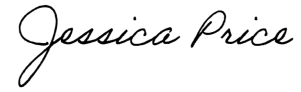
The decriminalization and expungement legislation passed by the legislature was a step in the right direction, but we must do more to help repair the damage done by marijuana prohibition. New Yorkers need restorative justice, including reinvestment in those communities that have been hit the hardest.

Any proposal worth passing should include broad record clearing provisions, center equity and options for small businesses in the new industry, and guarantee significant community

reinvestment to repair the harm done by decades of misguided prohibition policies and enforcement.

Thank you for your time and dedication to helping create new marijuana policies that build up all communities and help to set right the injustices of the past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Price". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Jessica Price
Long Island, New York