



Working to Reform Marijuana Laws

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## Louisiana (2022): SB 221, Testimony in support of expunging low-level marijuana possession charges

My name is Jax James and I serve as the State Policy Manager for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). I would like to thank the Senate Committee on Judiciary for considering Senate Bill 221. NORML is supportive of legislative efforts to expunge low-level marijuana possession charges.

Senate Bill 221 seeks to reconsider criminal sentences for those individuals convicted of marijuana possession in an amount of 14 grams or less.

This bill would allow those unjustly incarcerated for a cannabis conviction, which is no longer criminalized in the state, to file a motion requesting a resentencing of their conviction, which would be effective as of August 1, 2022.

Current state law provides that the possession of cannabis in an amount of 14 grams or less is penalized with a fine of \$100 for offenses committed after 8/1/21.

With the passage of cannabis decriminalization legislation, it is only logical to allow those individuals unfairly impacted by marijuana prohibition to receive justice. People with otherwise clean records do not deserve for the rest of their life to be derailed because of an erroneous marijuana conviction that would not have been prosecuted today. It is incumbent upon lawmakers to ensure this justice is served.

For these reasons, NORML urges Louisiana lawmakers to thoughtfully consider and pass SB 221 so that minor offenders are no longer stigmatized and disenfranchised by the collateral consequences of an arrest record for an incident that is no longer a crime.

