



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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March 10, 2022

The Honorable Mia Bonta
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 5620
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 1706 (BONTA) SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1706.

Our Office strongly supports the aim of AB 1706 to allow people with prior eligible Proposition 64 cannabis convictions to move on with their lives without the stigma of their prior criminal conviction.

As the co-author of Proposition 64, the 2016 measure that made cannabis legal in California, District Attorney Gascón has been at the forefront in eliminating prior cannabis convictions.

In Los Angeles County, roughly 66,000 cannabis convictions were dismissed last year after Assembly Bill 1793 was passed that tasked prosecutors in California with affirmatively reviewing the convictions.

However, the review only covered cases from state Department of Justice data. Further examination of Los Angeles County court records uncovered approximately 58,000 felony and misdemeanor cases dating back more than three decades that are eligible for dismissal.

In total, nearly 125,000 cannabis cases are being dismissed in Los Angeles County. The latest batch of cases eligible for dismissal could come as a surprise to people who either thought their convictions were already dismissed last year or were not aware they are eligible for resentencing.

Although no law required prosecutors to take further action on the cannabis convictions, our Office wanted to ensure by sealing their records, it would no longer hamper the ability of those convicted from obtaining employment, affecting their immigration status or receiving educational opportunities.

While our Office has gone beyond what was required by AB 1793, we understand that implementation of AB 1793 has been inconsistent across the state. AB 1793 also failed to

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provide courts with a deadline to process cases submitted by local prosecutors for dismissal and no oversight to ensure timely processing of these records occurred. This lack of a specified deadline and oversight has led to a wide variance in county compliance with AB 1793 which has led to thousands of Californians not receiving the conviction relief they are legally entitled to. According to an investigation by the Los Angeles Times, there are at least 34,000 cannabis-related records that still have not been fully processed by the courts.

Dismissing these eligible convictions means the possibility of a better future for thousands of disenfranchised people and clears a path for them to find jobs, housing and other services that were previously denied to them because of unjust cannabis laws.

California has always been a leader in progressive reform, and we are pleased to extend our support of AB 1793, another step in the right direction.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Daniel Felizzatto in my Sacramento Legislative Office at (916) 442-0668.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gascón", written in a cursive style.

GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney