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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants to States and units of local government to reduce the financial and administrative burden of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants to States and units of local government to reduce the financial and administrative burden of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Harnessing Opportuni-
5 ties by Pursuing Expungement Act of 2021” or the
6 “HOPE Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. STATE EXPUNGEMENT OPPORTUNITY GRANT PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 (a) NAME OF PROGRAM.—The grant program estab-
4 lished under this section shall be known as the “State
5 Expungement Opportunity Grant Program”.

6 (b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is au-
7 thorized to make grants to States and units of local gov-
8 ernment to reduce the financial and administrative burden
9 of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses that are
10 available to individuals who have been convicted of such
11 offenses under the laws of the State.

12 (c) APPLICATION.—The chief executive of a State or
13 unit of local government seeking a grant under this section
14 shall submit to the Attorney General an application at
15 such time, in such manner, and containing such informa-
16 tion as the Attorney General may reasonably require.

17 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section shall
18 be used—

19 (1) for technology to provide cost-effective legal
20 relief at scale;

21 (2) to automate the process of expunging con-
22 victions for cannabis offenses;

23 (3) for clinics, including legal clinics, that assist
24 individuals through the expungement process;

25 (4) to implement the notice requirement de-
26 scribed in subsection (e);

1 (5) to seal records of conviction for cannabis of-
2 fenses, if appropriate; and

3 (6) for other innovative partnerships to provide
4 wide-scale relief to individuals who are eligible for
5 the expungement of a conviction for a cannabis of-
6 fense under the laws of the State.

7 (e) NOTICE REQUIREMENT.—A jurisdiction that re-
8 ceives a grant under this section shall—

9 (1) publish on a publicly accessible website in-
10 formation about the availability and process of
11 expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, includ-
12 ing information for individuals living in a different
13 jurisdiction who were convicted of a cannabis offense
14 in that jurisdiction;

15 (2) implement a process to notify each indi-
16 vidual convicted of a cannabis offense when—

17 (A) the expungement process has begun;

18 and

19 (B) when the expungement is complete,
20 which shall, if applicable, include an official cer-
21 tificate of expungement (including any other
22 similar document used by the jurisdiction).

23 (f) REPORT.—A jurisdiction that receives a grant
24 under this section shall submit to the Attorney General
25 a report describing the uses of such funds, and how many

1 convictions for cannabis offenses have been expunged
2 using such funds.

3 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
4 authorized to be appropriated \$2,000,000 to carry out this
5 section for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2032.

6 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF CRIMINAL OFFENSES**
7 **RELATED TO CANNABIS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
9 date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall
10 conduct a study and submit to Congress and make pub-
11 licly available on the website of the Department of Justice
12 a report on—

13 (1) the effects of the appearance on an individ-
14 ual's criminal record report of a conviction for a
15 criminal offense related to cannabis, including—

16 (A) disqualifying him or her from future
17 opportunities in housing and employment;

18 (B) increasing the likelihood that the indi-
19 vidual will have future involvement with the
20 criminal justice system;

21 (C) how any such effects differ based on
22 demographics, including race; and

23 (D) any other matters determined appro-
24 priate by the Attorney General; and

1 (2) the costs incurred by States for incarcer-
2 ating an individual convicted for a criminal offense
3 related to cannabis.

4 (b) CLARIFICATION.—The report under subsection
5 (a) may not include any personally identifiable informa-
6 tion.

7 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) The term “cannabis” means either mari-
10 juana or cannabis as defined under the State law
11 authorizing the sale or use of cannabis in which the
12 individual or entity is located.

13 (2) The term “cannabis offense” means a
14 criminal offense related to cannabis that, under
15 State law, is no longer an offense or that was des-
16 ignated a lesser offense or for which the penalty was
17 reduced under State law pursuant to or following
18 the adoption of a State law authorizing the sale or
19 use of cannabis.