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## **Immigrant Defense Project Calls on President Biden to Extend Marijuana Pardon Protections to Immigrants**

*The Immigrant Defense Project has issued the following statement from Jane Shim, Senior Policy Attorney, in response to President Biden's proclamation granting pardons to thousands of people convicted of simple possession of marijuana:*

"Marijuana prohibition has devastated poor communities and communities of color for too long, and President Biden's decision to pardon some federal marijuana possession convictions is one step in addressing those harms. However, it is extremely disappointing that the Administration went out of its way to exclude undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, even immigrants who were pardoned may remain at risk of detention and deportation because of a marijuana offense, thanks to our punitive immigration laws.

"President Biden can and should ensure that marijuana possession convictions do not jeopardize a person's immigration status. Federal immigration authorities regularly deny green card and citizenship applications due to marijuana possession convictions. ICE has already deported thousands of people for marijuana possession, and continues to do so today. Pardons that clear the way for employment, housing, and educational opportunities will be little solace to families threatened with separation through deportation by ICE.

"President Biden's direction to "initiat[e] the administrative process to review" how marijuana is scheduled is not enough. Marijuana must be fully descheduled, and communities most harmed by prohibition—including immigrant communities of color—need to see real and lasting returns from legalization. We must also change immigration law to ensure that marijuana-related activity does not result in detention and deportation."

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*The Immigrant Defense Project (IDP) is a New York-based nonprofit that works to secure fairness and justice for immigrants in the racially-biased U.S. criminal and immigration systems. IDP fights to end the current era of unprecedented mass criminalization, detention and deportation through a multi-pronged strategy including advocacy, litigation, legal support, community partnerships, and strategic communications. IDP is also a member of the Marijuana Justice Coalition. Visit [www.immigrantdefenseproject.org](http://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org) and follow [@ImmDefense](https://twitter.com/ImmDefense).*