

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

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NEW HOUSE BILL WOULD REPEAL HEMP FELON BAN *Rep. David Trone (D-MD) Introduces Bi-Partisan Free to Grow Act Of 2023 That Permits Former Felons To Obtain Hemp Licenses*

WASHINGTON D.C. — Today, Rep. David Trone (D-MD), joined by Reps. David Joyce (R-OH), Nancy Mace (R-SC) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME), filed a bill that would repeal the controversial provision of the 2018 Farm Bill which prohibits felons who have completed their sentences from participating in hemp production. The Free to Grow Act of 2023 amends the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to remove language banning any persons convicted of a drug felony from obtaining a license to grow or process hemp.

“Even though employment is the number one indicator of decreased recidivism, returning citizens are still unemployed at a rate of over 27 percent. To make matters worse, after paying their debts to society, returning citizens are prohibited from doing what’s best for their business or pursuing a career path of their choice — that’s not justice,” said **Congressman David Trone, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Second Chance Task Force**. “In my business, I hired over 500 returning citizens because I know giving folks a real second chance leads to economic growth and a better community. It’s wrong to keep folks from rebuilding their lives— this bill helps fix that.”

“We believe that if you have paid your time, you should be able to grow a perfectly legal crop. Prohibiting exonerated drug felons from participating in the hemp industry only perpetuates disenfranchisement and social injustice as many drug-related convictions, particularly those involving marijuana, have often been racially targeted. We are grateful to Rep. David Trone (D-MD) and his co-sponsors for recognizing the discriminatory nature of the hemp felon ban and for championing the Free To Grow Act of 2023 so that all producers have access to this economic opportunity,” **Jonathan Miller, General Counsel of the U.S. Hemp Roundtable**.

The Free To Grow Act of 2023 is endorsed by the U.S. Hemp Roundtable and an ideologically diverse range of non-profit organizations including Americans for Prosperity, the Drug Policy Alliance, and Minorities for Medical Marijuana Cannabis & Hemp Policy.

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ABOUT

The U.S. Hemp Roundtable is the hemp industry’s national advocacy organization, a coalition of dozens of leading companies and organizations committed to safe hemp and CBD products. The Roundtable proudly works in partnership with the industry’s leading national, regional and state grassroots organizations, and is leading the way forward for hemp and CBD products through education and action. More at hempsupporter.com.