



H.R. 1428: Repeal The Hemp Felon Ban

This bill allows certain individuals convicted of a felony offense to participate in hemp production.

Rep. David Trone (D-MD), joined by Reps. David Joyce (R-OH), Nancy Mace (R-SC) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME), are championing legislation 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.

David Trone (D-MD)

SPONSORED BY

David Joyce (R-OH)*
Nancy Mace (R-SC)*

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Adam Smith (D-WA)
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