

Contact: Andrea Lindsay  
267-367-5470

For Immediate Release

## **Pennsylvania Board of Pardons Grants Public Hearing to a Few Hundred Applicants to the PA Marijuana Pardon Project; Thousands Denied**

Philadelphia, PA -- The Pennsylvania Board of Pardons held its “merit review” session yesterday for the thousands of people who had applied for relief as part of the PA Marijuana Pardon Project. Billed as a one-time program to ["quickly pardon thousands of Pennsylvanians from minor, non-violent marijuana-related convictions,"](#) the PA Marijuana Pardon Project [reported receiving 3,539 applications](#) at the end of its 30-day application window.

At yesterday’s merit review, 231 applicants were granted a public hearing. 2,002 applicants were denied. The rest were either not scheduled or held under advisement. Over 93% of the applications the Board of Pardons reported receiving for this program have, to date, failed to pass merit review.

"There are a few thousand people whose hopes were just dashed, including the BOP staff who invested an amazing amount of passion and commitment into making this program work," said Tobey Oxholm, Director of the statewide Pardon Project at Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE).

Since July, PLSE and the Pardon Project Steering Committee have been representing [11 petitioners across the Commonwealth calling for a general pardon for all non-violent marijuana convictions in Pennsylvania](#). Based on [past conviction data provided by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts](#), PLSE estimates there are over a hundred thousand Pennsylvanians who could benefit from marijuana amnesty.

"Countless staff hours and untold taxpayer funds were undoubtedly spent on this program, only to result in a 94% rejection rate," said Andrea Lindsay, PLSE's Director of Strategic Initiatives, including the [Marijuana Amnesty Project](#). "The PA Marijuana Pardon Project’s failure to deliver meaningful results when Pennsylvania's constitution clearly gives the governor power to grant a general pardon makes it abundantly clear this issue must be placed back in the governor's hands."