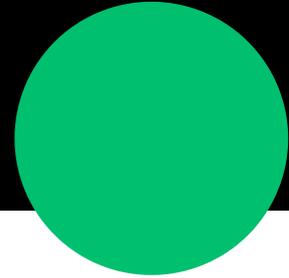


LAST PRISONER PROJECT



The Honorable Gretchen E. Whitmer
Governor of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: Early release of Rudi Gammo, Michael Thompson, and all Michigan cannabis prisoners

Dear Governor Whitmer,

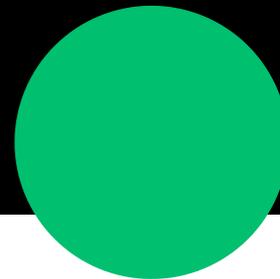
I hope this letter finds you well. As you are aware, undersigned counsel of the Last Prisoner Project is joined with the Cannabis Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party, the Redemption Foundation, FORCE Detroit, Law Office of Barton Morris and the 37 companies and individuals listed below in requesting that you grant early release for Michael Thompson, Rudi Gammo and all nonviolent cannabis prisoners in Michigan.

Rudi Gammo was arrested while operating a dispensary sanctioned by the city of Detroit under Michigan's 2008 medical cannabis law, a dispensary which remains open to this day while Rudi sits behind bars. He is serving a five-year prison sentence that began in 2018 while his family suffers as a result. Rudi's 6-year-old son Santino Gammo was recently diagnosed with leukemia and has begun treatment without having the help and support of his father. And just days ago, Rudi tested positive for COVID-19, a potentially deadly sentence at a time when prison healthcare systems are under heavy strain.

Michael Thompson sold three pounds of cannabis in 1994 to an informant in the Flint Area Narcotics Group. While no guns were used during the sale for which he was arrested, officers later found guns in his home and in a locked safe. Michael, who had previously committed drug-related felonies, was convicted of five counts for the offense. He was sentenced to 10-15 years for the marijuana counts and 42-60 years for the firearm possession counts, culminating in a draconian sentence that gives him the first opportunity for release at the age of 87. Michael has also contracted COVID-19 within the Michigan prison system and is particularly at risk due to his age and Type 2 diabetes.

In 2013 the ACLU found that Black Americans were 3.3 times more likely to be arrested and convicted for marijuana related offenses than white people. At the time of this report, ACLU of Michigan Racial Justice Staff Attorney Mark Fancher is quoted as saying that, "the War on Marijuana has amounted to a war on people of color," and the continued imprisonment of Michael Thompson is a prime example of this injustice.

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The Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act (MRTMA) passed by an overwhelming majority in 2018. If Michael Thompson were to deliver three pounds of marijuana to an undercover police officer under that law today, his sentence would be no more than 90 days in jail (see Sec. 15(4) MRTMA). The fact that Mr. Thompson is still serving a 60-year prison sentence is fundamentally unjust.

Until only a few weeks ago, Michigan was the only state in the U.S. to have legalized adult-use cannabis but fail to provide nonviolent criminal marijuana conviction expungements or sentence commutations at the same time.

The October 12, 2020 signing of the “clean slate” bill to expunge certain offenses was a positive start, but it still leaves many nonviolent cannabis prisoners like Rudi Gammo and Michael Thompson languishing behind bars, while others make millions of dollars doing almost the exact same thing under the state’s new cannabis laws. In your first press conference after winning your gubernatorial election in November, 2018, you were quoted by the Detroit News saying, “I think that the people of Michigan have said that for conduct that would now be legal, no one should bear a lifelong record for that conduct.”

The Last Prisoner Project and following organizations and individuals have come together to urge you to keep your word and grant release for Rudi Gammo, Michael Thompson, and all nonviolent cannabis prisoners in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gersten
Executive Director and General Counsel
Last Prisoner Project

02VAPE
3Fifteen Cannabis
Act Labs
Arbors Wellness
Bahoura Law
Bullit Budz
C3 Industries
Cannrose Cannabis Co.
Cloud Cannabis
Dean St Peter
Detroit Buds
Driven Grow

Fluresh
Fresh Coast Extracts
Gage Cannabis Co.
Great Lakes Holistics
Green Cross Detroit
Home Grown
James Salame
Law Offices of Barton Morris
Martin Waymire
Michigan Cannabis Industry Association
Michigan S & P
Midnight Roots
New Standard

Northern Specialty Health
Om of Medicine
Pharmhouse Wellness
Real Leaf Solutions
Redbud Roots
Redemption Cannabis
Skymint
Sozo
Sparrow Consulting
The Botanical Company
The Refinery
Truu Cannabis