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**Feds Cannabis Banking Must Not Come Before Cannabis Civil Rights**  
***Congress Will Kill Legalization in Favor of a Backroom Deal on Big Pot Banking Bill***  
***Plan is to Keep Harris Amendment in Force, Again Overturning Will of D.C. Voters***  
***DCMJ and Allies Warn Legalization is Dead Without a Vote on the MORE Act***

WASHINGTON – During the lame duck session of the 117th Congress, education and advocacy organization District of Columbia Marijuana Justice (DCMJ) calls on Senate Democrats to pass the MORE Act, not the SAFE Banking Act. The SAFE Banking Act will do nothing for the average cannabis consumer and only helps the fat cat cannabis industry executives move massive amounts of money across state lines. Moreover, the passage of the SAFE Banking Act does nothing to remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act, which will allow the federal budget rider sponsored by Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD) that prevents the creation of a retail cannabis market in the nation’s capital to remain in place for another year, possibly two. Voters in Washington, D.C. approved full legalization in 2014, but the Harris rider has prevented the D.C. government from passing legislation to reduce penalties for any Schedule I substance, including the taxation and regulation of retail cannabis sales.

If the Senate were to pass the MORE Act, the Harris rider would become moot because his rider only concerns Schedule I substances listed in the Controlled Substances Act and the MORE Act would fully remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act. The SAFE Banking Act is seen by cannabis consumers as a means for corporate cannabis conglomerates to get a leg up over legacy businesses.

“There is no marijuana justice in the SAFE Banking Act. How does Congress justify allowing the cannabis industry to have access to the federal banking system at the same time it doesn’t allow voting age Americans to have access to legal cannabis under federal law? It’s like legalizing money laundering,” said DCMJ co-founder Adam Eiding.

“But the true irony here is Congress fully intends to give the cannabis industry a big gift at the same time it tells D.C. voters to ‘go to hell, your vote doesn’t matter.’ It’s hard to grasp the Democratic congressional leadership allowing corporate rights to supersede civil rights, but that is the path they are on,” Eiding added.

At the center of the problem is a group of Republican senators, who say they will back the industry getting to use federal insured banks, but they won't support an outright legalization bill that includes sweeping criminal justice reforms and equity guarantees. At the very least, Democrats should demand a public up or down vote on SAFE Banking in the Senate so everyone can be on the record. Instead, the plan at the moment is to attach SAFE Banking as a rider to the Pentagon budget, omnibus budget bill, or a continuing resolution just as Congress does in the case of the Harris Amendment, which is also tacked on to the federal budget.

"The MORE Act is what the majority of Americans want. The Senate Democrats should pass the MORE Act today," said DCMJ co-founder Nikolas Schiller, who also co-founded New York Marijuana Justice in Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's home state. "If Congress passes the SAFE Banking during the lame duck session, we can kiss good-bye any hope for federal legalization until after the 2024 elections. The true legalization advocates in Congress will lose the little leverage they have to try to find more votes for full legalization over the next two years. The House already passed the MORE Act, so Sen. Schumer should act now."

Kris Furnish, who co-founded Maryland Marijuana Justice (MDMJ) added, "The American people will not get the freedom to choose to use cannabis, and once again the will of the voters of the District of Columbia will be rejected. This is not what the leadership promised cannabis voters before last month's elections. We were led to believe we would get a vote on outright legalization. We're sick of being lied to by our elected leaders. We elected them believing they are fighting for us, but clearly they are not loyal to their constituents."

Co-founder of Virginia Marijuana Justice (VAMJ) Rachel Ramone Donlan called it "disgraceful for Congress to sell out full legalization for an industry give-away, but it is unconscionable to do so while you ignore the will of D.C. voters by once again passing the Harris cannabis prohibition rider at the same time."

**ABOUT DC MARIJUANA JUSTICE** *Since its founding in 2013, DCMJ has led the nation in creative and high-profile cannabis reform activism. After introducing and passing DC's Initiative 71 in 2014, which voters legalized the possession and cultivation of cannabis, DCMJ organized three large seed giveaways that provided all adults and Congressional staffers the means to grow cannabis for themselves, deployed giant 51-foot inflatable joints outside the Capitol, the White House, the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Times Square in New York City, the 2016 Presidential Debates, Annapolis Statehouse and Boston's Freedom Rally, as well as distributing over 10,000 joints of District of Columbia homegrown cannabis at the Inauguration of President Donald Trump, and attempting to distribute 1,227 joints at the congressional "Joint Session" in 2017, where U.S. Capitol Police unlawfully arrested seven DCMJ activists (All charges were dropped the following day). DCMJ will distribute more than 4,200 joints at vaccination sites across the District of Columbia on April 20, 2021 in conjunction with its upcoming "Joints For Jabs" cannabis giveaway. In 2018, 2019, and 2021, aligned organizations MDMJ, VAMJ, COMJ, and NYMJ were formed to advocate for cannabis reform in Maryland, Virginia, Colorado, and New York. In 2021, DCMJ conceptualized and launched the "Joints for Jabs" coronavirus vaccination incentive program that was spontaneously adopted around the U.S., including by the State of Washington. DCMJ demands cannabis be removed from the Controlled Substances Act and all Americans are given the right to grow cannabis in the safety and privacy of their homes.*

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