118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. ______

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants to States and units of local government to reduce the financial and administrative burden of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Joyce of Ohio introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ______

A BILL

To authorize the Attorney General to make grants to States and units of local government to reduce the financial and administrative burden of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Harnessing Opportunities by Pursuing Expungement Act of 2023” or the “HOPE Act of 2023”.
SEC. 2. STATE EXPUNGEMENT OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) NAME OF PROGRAM.—The grant program established under this section shall be known as the "State Expungement Opportunity Grant Program".

(b) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General is authorized to make grants to States and units of local government to reduce the financial and administrative burden of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses that are available to individuals who have been convicted of such offenses under the laws of the State.

(c) APPLICATION.—The chief executive of a State or unit of local government seeking a grant under this section shall submit to the Attorney General an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Attorney General may reasonably require.

(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section shall be used—

(1) for technology to provide cost-effective legal relief at scale;

(2) to automate the process of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses;

(3) for clinics, including legal clinics, that assist individuals through the expungement process;

(4) to implement the notice requirement described in subsection (e);
(5) to seal records of conviction for cannabis offenses, if appropriate; and
(6) for other innovative partnerships to provide wide-scale relief to individuals who are eligible for the expungement of a conviction for a cannabis offense under the laws of the State.

(e) NOTICE REQUIREMENT.—A jurisdiction that receives a grant under this section shall—

(1) publish on a publicly accessible website information about the availability and process of expunging convictions for cannabis offenses, including information for individuals living in a different jurisdiction who were convicted of a cannabis offense in that jurisdiction;

(2) implement a process to notify each individual convicted of a cannabis offense when—

(A) the expungement process has begun;
and

(B) when the expungement is complete, which shall, if applicable, include an official certificate of expungement (including any other similar document used by the jurisdiction).

(f) REPORT.—A jurisdiction that receives a grant under this section shall submit to the Attorney General a report describing the uses of such funds, and how many
convictions for cannabis offenses have been expunged
using such funds.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
authorized to be appropriated $2,000,000 to carry out this
section for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2033.

SEC. 3. STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF CRIMINAL OFFENSES
RELATED TO CANNABIS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall
carry out a study and submit to Congress and make pub-
licly available on the website of the Department of Justice
a report on—

(1) the effects of the appearance on an individ-
ual’s criminal record report of a conviction for a
criminal offense related to cannabis, including—

(A) disqualifying him or her from future
opportunities in housing and employment;

(B) increasing the likelihood that the indi-

dividual will have future involvement with the
criminal justice system;

(C) how any such effects differ based on
demographics, including race; and

(D) any other matters determined appro-
priate by the Attorney General; and
(2) the costs incurred by States for incarcerating an individual convicted for a criminal offense related to cannabis.

(b) CLARIFICATION.—The report under subsection (a) may not include any personally identifiable information.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term "cannabis" means either marijuana or cannabis as defined under the State law authorizing the sale or use of cannabis in which the individual or entity is located.

(2) The term "cannabis offense" means a criminal offense related to cannabis that, under State law, is no longer an offense or that was designated a lesser offense or for which the penalty was reduced under State law pursuant to or following the adoption of a State law authorizing the sale or use of cannabis.