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Trump Administration Will Deny Citizenship to Immigrants Working in Legal Cannabis Biz

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Last year, [I wrote a piece that looked at](#) the perils of working in the cannabis industry, or using cannabis, for undocumented individuals, and even had it translated into several languages in the hope that it would reach the largest intended audience. Last week, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a statement reminding those applying for US citizenship that they must not consume nor work in the cannabis industry, even if it's in a state with a regulated cannabis program, medical or recreational.

[Merry Jane covered this dire warning](#), sharing excerpts from the press release, which reminds readers, "We issued policy guidance clarifying that naturalization applicants must comply with federal controlled substance laws, including those pertaining to marijuana, to establish good moral character during the naturalization application process." (Certainly something the Trump administration can speak on with the utmost of authority is the establishment of good moral character. Truly they have the biggest moral character, everyone says so.)

It makes literally no difference that 10 states and the District of Columbia have adult-use cannabis programs currently in place, while another 25 states allow some form of medical cannabis. As a USCIS spokesperson told CNN, "Marijuana remains illegal under federal law as a Schedule I controlled substance regardless of any actions to decriminalize its possession, use, or sale at the state and local level."

Merry Jane recounts an ABC News interview with two documented immigrants in the process of applying for citizenship, one of them a man from El Salvador who immigrated to Colorado 29 years ago and took a job in the cannabis industry. "The American life is the only life I've known and lived. Twenty-nine years of me being here, not breaking the law in any way, at least on a state level. I've done everything by the book."

The USCIS cited a lack of "good moral character" because the applicants had worked with cannabis. Efforts to appeal the decision are underway, including a letter sent by Denver's mayor to US Attorney General William Barr, asking the Justice Department to stop denying applicants simply for working in an industry recognized and regulated by the state.

Those applying for citizenship are already facing significant challenges, with the Cato Institute determining that since Trump took office, there has been an increase of application rejections of 37 percent. Not that we needed it, but this serves as another reminder that many people *still* associate cannabis with being a bad person, even when working in a state with a fully regulated program. It's no real surprise that, per Merry Jane, "The 15 states where weed remains completely outlawed all elected Trump in the 2016 presidential election."