

Dear <Salutation>,

Last month, I wrote to you about a special opportunity to help the [Client] increase its efforts against the war on drugs.

Thanks to a generous friend, all donations made between now and December 31st will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$150,000.

If you are one of the generous individuals who has already given a gift, please disregard this reminder and accept my thanks. Our work wouldn't be possible without your dedication.

But if you have not yet had the chance to make a special matching gift, I urge you not to wait. The deadline to reach our \$150,000 goal is approaching—so please respond as soon as possible to make sure we succeed.

I can't thank you enough for your commitment to our work—and for your belief that **all** people are deserving of dignity, respect, and care—no matter what they put into their bodies.

From helping us advocate for the opening of overdose prevention centers in New York City to the descheduling of marijuana through the passage of the MORE Act, your support this past year has enabled us to achieve critical victories against the war on drugs.

Despite the strides we've made, we still have our work cut out for us. For decades, elected officials have sold Americans on the war on drugs under the premise that it is for the public's protection.

In reality, the vast majority of drug-related arrests are for personal possession alone—an alarming fact when taken together with the statistic that one in five people who is incarcerated is incarcerated for a drug law violation. Meanwhile, the U.S. government spends **\$47 billion per year** on the enforcement of drug prohibition laws.

Rather than enhancing the safety and health of the people it impacts, the war on drugs only serves to punish members of already-marginalized communities through surveillance and incarceration.

<Salutation>, the war on drugs is a war on freedom. In order for us to cultivate a just society, it needs to end—once and for all. That's why I'm writing to you today.

Will you help the [Client] raise \$150,000 to end this war for good by making a tax-deductible gift of \$[ask1], \$[ask2], or more?

Drug possession is currently the most arrested offense in the U.S.—despite overwhelming public support for treating drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal one.

By making a matching gift today, you will enable the [Client] to double our efforts toward groundbreaking legislative and policy efforts—and pave the way for a future in which the

regulation of drugs is grounded in compassion and human rights instead of deeply rooted systemic inequities like racism.

As it stands, the criminalization of drugs in America is used as a tool of oppression.

In the U.S., Black people make up 24% of drug arrests—almost double their demographic percentage—and are three times more likely to be arrested for drugs than white people, despite using and selling drugs at the same rates.

What’s more, after “illegal entry,” drug offenses are the most common reason people are deported. In fact, a 2016 analysis found that 76% of Black immigrants were deported on criminal—and often drug-related—grounds in contrast to 45% overall.

With your support, the [Client] can combat these injustices—first by fiercely advocating for the **decriminalization of drugs**. That means putting a stop to arrests for what people put into their bodies and eliminating criminal penalties for drug paraphernalia like drug-checking supplies.

It means replacing punitive measures with health-centered ones through overdose prevention centers, which will provide people who use drugs with access to safe substances and support services in a supervised environment—a critical shift, given New York’s overdose crisis kills more people than traffic accidents, homicides, and suicides combined.

And it means eliminating the devastating, life-long consequences drug arrests result in for millions of people, as Oregon has by becoming the first state in the nation to decriminalize the possession of all drugs and increasing access to supportive health services—an effort spearheaded by the [Client] **thanks to the support of people like you.**

The impact of the war on drugs extends far beyond arrest and incarceration, however. From education, healthcare, and housing to immigration and employment, its harms are deeply destabilizing, trapping people in poverty, robbing them of their homes, depriving them of their wages and job opportunities, and separating them from their families.

But testing positive for a drug metabolite shouldn’t automatically mean disqualification from a job or being torn away from your children. Unsurprisingly, efforts to target parents using drugs as a pretext disproportionately punish parents of color.

By making a matching gift today, you’ll help us combat these disparities—and the drug war’s devastating and insidious grasp on too many people’s lives—through initiatives like **[Initiative]**.

In making a gift, you will be supporting the initiative—and making a call to action: for all of us to work together, across movements and with legislators, to provide reform recommendations and create policy proposals to fully extract the drug war and its culture of criminalization from our society—and especially from the lives of those it impacts most.

I know you agree: \$47 billion is an egregious amount of money to spend on the enforcement of drug laws each year.

Between their unchecked power and the inflated budgets under which their departments operate, police have only been made more lethal by the enormous funds allocated to the drug war, pursuing drug-related arrests through aggressive and violent tactics.

These very tactics are terroristic, as they are used to surveil, brutalize, and murder members of Black, Latinx, and Native communities.

This systemic violence must stop. With your help, the [Client] will counter racist police enforcement by advocating for the **reinvestment of the resources** currently used for drug enforcement into non-punitive responses.

Your gift will enable us to fight for restitution for communities where the drug war has been most unjustly enforced, as we did through the passage of New York's historic marijuana legalization law.

Under New York's law, state marijuana tax revenue and savings from the enforcement of punitive laws will be invested into community-led initiatives that address the harms inflicted by the drug war, including re-entry services, afterschool programs, skills-building and job-training programs, and more.

And rather than allow our federal, state, and local governments pour tens of billions of dollars each year into arrests, incarceration, and other punitive measures—whose effects reverberate through the lives of countless people beyond those arrested—we can work toward tearing down the very foundation of the drug war.

By making a matching gift today, you'll enable the [Client] to shift away from leading state campaigns to focus more on our role as watchdog and advisor while ensuring legalization efforts center racial equity, justice, and community reinvestment.

Using our marijuana justice regulation model—which has become the gold standard for how to **“legalize it right”** across the country—we'll continue working to make sure these principles are adopted as we fight to end federal marijuana prohibition through the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment & Expungement, or **the MORE Act**.

The MORE Act, which was passed by the House in November 2020, is the first bill to completely deschedule marijuana, address the lifelong consequences of marijuana criminalization, reinvest in communities that have borne the brunt of prohibition, and take steps to ensure an equitable marketplace.

With your support, the [Client] will not only be able to work to move other groundbreaking bills like the MORE Act forward; we will also be able to educate legislators on the inequities created by drug prohibition while building momentum around just federal reform.

And we will move beyond marijuana to the next generation of reform: the legal, safe, and responsible regulation of all drugs—because even if marijuana is legalized everywhere, the drug war and its harms will rage on due to the criminalization of other drugs.

Finally, despite narratives that have been put forth by politicians on both sides of the aisle, research and history have shown that the criminalization of people who sell drugs neither reduces problematic drug use nor cuts down on the availability of drugs.

By donating today, you'll help counter these myths—which are often racist and have fueled the war on drugs for decades—by helping the [Client] persuade elected officials to treat drug use as a public health issue rather than a criminal one.

And with your support, we will see more victories like the complete decriminalization of drug possession in Oregon, the legalization of marijuana and opening of overdose prevention centers in New York, and the landmark passage of the MORE Act in the House.

Ending the war on drugs tomorrow will not right the wrongs it has wrought so far. It will not erase the pain experienced by so many millions of people, or by the more than 450,000 people who are behind bars in U.S. prisons and jails for drug offenses as we speak.

It will not restore the economic, educational, and career opportunities they have been robbed of or give them back the time they have lost with their loved ones.

It will, however, provide hope that a better future lies ahead. One wherein, through decriminalization, legalization, and restitution, long overdue justice becomes the new status quo.

Please, make a matching gift today to help the [Client] reach our \$150,000 goal by December 31st.

Together, we can end the war on drugs for good. I hope I can count on your support.

In solidarity,

[Name]
Executive Director

P.S. Your matching gift will enable the [Client] to put a stop to the far-reaching injustices fueled by the drug war. **Make a tax-deductible gift before December 31st, and your donation will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$150,000 to support decriminalization, legalization, and community reinvestment. Thank you.**

Reply:

Yes, I want to help the [Client] build momentum to end the drug war and promote new drug policies that help people instead of punishing them. Enclosed is my generous gift of:

OE Teaser:

2X MATCH OPPORTUNITY – GIVE BY 12/31!

MATCHING OPPORTUNITY INSIDE – GIVE BY 12/31!

2X YOUR IMPACT BY 12/31 DEADLINE!

Insert:

The war on drugs is a war on freedom.

The time for a change is long overdue. By making a gift today, you will enable the [Client] to reach our **\$150,000 goal**—and pave the way for a future in which the regulation of drugs is grounded in compassion and human rights instead of deeply rooted systemic inequities like racism.

With your help, we can dismantle the foundations of the drug war and replace them with systems of racial equity, justice, and community reinvestment.

With your matching gift, you will enable victories like...

- The passage of the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment & Expungement, or **the MORE Act**, which, in addition to being the first bill to completely deschedule marijuana, takes other meaningful steps toward addressing the lifelong consequences of its criminalization.
- Oregon's decision to become the first state in the nation to **decriminalize the possession of all drugs** and increase access to supportive health services.
- The replacement of punitive measures with health-centered ones through the **opening of overdose prevention centers** in New York City, which will provide people who use drugs with access to safe substances and support services in a supervised environment.

Together, we can end the war on drugs—for good.