

# Last Prisoner Project Responds to Governor Spanberger's Proposed Changes to Marijuana Resentencing Bill

*Amended bill replaces automatic hearings with a petition-based process for eligible marijuana convictions*

RICHMOND, VA, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Last Prisoner Project](#) (LPP), a national nonprofit dedicated to freeing people incarcerated for cannabis offenses, responded today to Governor Spanberger's proposed amendments to Virginia's marijuana resentencing legislation (SB 62/HB 26), culminating a multi-year push by LPP and partners to deliver relief to people serving outdated cannabis sentences.



This legislation will give eligible Virginians a real chance for justice in the state's legal system."

*Stephanie Shepard, Executive Director, Last Prisoner Project*

The Governor's amendments replace the bill's automatic

resentencing provisions with a petition-based process, altering how eligible individuals may access relief. While the changes shift a key component of the legislation, LPP emphasizes that the bill represents an important opportunity to advance justice for people serving outdated cannabis sentences.

"Virginia has taken an important step forward by continuing to move this legislation, made possible by state leadership and the advocates, families, and communities who refused to let this issue be ignored," said Stephanie Shepard, Executive Director of Last Prisoner Project. "I served a ten-year sentence in federal prison for a first-time, nonviolent cannabis offense. I know what it means to lose birthdays, holidays, and everyday moments with the people you love because of outdated cannabis policies. This legislation will give eligible Virginians a real chance for justice in the state's legal system. LPP will continue working with partners, families, and constituents to make sure this law delivers meaningful relief."

Under the legislative process, the amended bill now returns to the General Assembly for a vote on the Governor's recommendations. While Last Prisoner Project would have preferred an automatic pathway, this amended version represents meaningful progress, and the organization urges the General Assembly to pass the amended bill.

For years, LPP has worked with Virginia lawmakers, advocates, and directly impacted people to advance sentencing reform that gives courts the power to revisit cannabis sentences that no longer reflect current law. As originally passed, the legislation guaranteed automatic court hearings for eligible marijuana convictions, empowered judges to reduce or modify sentences that no longer reflect current law, and extended relief to people who are still incarcerated, under supervision, or adjudicated as juveniles.

Even with the Governor's amendments, the legislation represents meaningful progress in addressing the harms caused by outdated cannabis laws. Advancing a resentencing framework marks a significant step forward after years of advocacy.

Last year, Virginia lawmakers advanced legislation focused on clearing criminal records, streamlining state-initiated expungements, and sealing certain ancillary records tied to cannabis charges and arrests.

In 2025, Governor Glenn Youngkin [vetoed](#) a similar LPP-designed sentence modification bill. In her Virginia Mercury op-ed on the issue, Shepard [highlighted](#) that the veto denied relief and potential freedom to more than 1,840 people still incarcerated or under state supervision for cannabis-related offenses. Across multiple legislative cycles, LPP has provided testimony, technical feedback, and direct policy support to help keep resentencing reform on the agenda and move it closer to enactment.

LPP thanks partner organizations and key General Assembly members involved in passing this legislation, including Marijuana Justice Virginia, NoLef Turns, Justice Forward Virginia, Senators Louise Lucas, Emily Jordan, Scott Surovell, and Angelia Williams Graves, and Delegate Rozia Henson, Jr., and all the patrons who have supported this effort over multiple legislative sessions.

This legislation marks a milestone for the Virginians and families harmed by outdated cannabis convictions. Despite these amendments, this progress shows we are closer than ever to delivering long-overdue relief. Last Prisoner Project will continue working to ensure this law delivers meaningful relief and brings families closer to reunification.

Ben DePasquale  
Last Prisoner Project  
+1 717-779-4660

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.