

While The Trump Administration Awards Millions In Small Business Aid To Cannabis Companies, Nonviolent Drug Offenders Die In Prison

Trump's Administration Has Awarded Cannabis Industry Companies Almost \$8 Million In Forgivable Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Aid.

Companies In The Cannabis/CBD Industry Have Taken \$7,967,724 In Forgivable Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Aid.

LOAN DATE	COMPANY	STATE	LOAN AMOUNT
Apr-20	Akerna Corp.	CO	\$2,204,600
4/10/20	Better Choice Co Inc.	FL	\$400,000
4/14/20	Acquired Sales Corp	IL	\$149,623
4/16/20	urban-gro, Inc.	CO	\$1,020,600
4/17/20	GrowLife, Inc.	WA	\$362,500
4/23/20	Mentor Capital Inc.	CA	\$76,500
4/24/20	Can B Corp.	NY	\$193,250
4/27/20	cbdMD, Inc.	NC	\$1,456,100
4/30/20	Charlie's Holdings, Inc.	CA	\$866,361
5/1/20	*22nd Century Group Inc.	NV	\$1,200,000
5/4/20	Medtainer Inc.	CA	\$137,690
5/6/20	CFN Enterprises, Inc.	CA	\$263,000
TOTAL			\$8,330,224

* Company returned funds

“Akerna Consolidates Cannabis Technology Companies To Connect Data Points In The Global Cannabis Supply Chain.” [[Home](#), Akerna Corp., accessed 05/27/20]

Better Choice Company Offers “Hemp-Derived CBD Supplements.” “Better Choice Company is a pet health and wellness portfolio company, offering consumers a wide variety of recognized premium pet products and hemp-derived CBD supplements.” [[Our Brands](#),” Better Choice Company, accessed 05/27/20]

Acquired Sales Corp. Produces Cannabinoid Products. “We believe in the value of cannabinoids (e.g., CBD, CBG, CBN, etc.) which are extracted from hemp and do not contain THC, so they do not get you high, and are legal for sale in all 50 states. The cannabinoid-infused products industry is growing very rapidly, and we want to be at the forefront.” [[Home](#), Acquired Sales Corp., accessed 05/27/20]

Urban-Gro Inc Designs “High Performance Indoor Cannabis Cultivation Facilities Around The World.” “urban-gro, Inc. (OTCQX: UGRO) is a leading engineering design services company that integrates complex equipment systems into high performance indoor cannabis cultivation facilities around the world.” [[About Us](#),” urban-gro Inc., accessed 05/27/20]

GrowLife, Inc. Advertised The Usage Of Their Hydroponic Systems In Cannabis Cultivation. “As the Director of Horticulture for a national cannabis corporation operating in 4 different states, I can attest to the importance of a top notch supply distribution network. We have worked with GrowLife for almost 2 years and I can confidently recommend their services to any operating in this space. The team at GrowLife’s dedication to providing the lowest pricing, best advice and superior customer service has set GrowLife apart from so many others I have worked with in the past. No one will work harder, nor achieve nearly as expeditious results for you and your business.” The testimonial was from Sean Band, Director of Horticulture at CannaPharmacy. [[What Our Customers Say](#),” GrowLife, Inc., accessed 6/1/20]

In Late 2019, Mentor Capital, Inc. Expanded Beyond Its “Primary Focus” On “Medical Marijuana And Cannabis Companies.” “In late 2019, Mentor Capital expanded its target industry from its primary focus on medical marijuana and cannabis companies to potentially include energy, mining and minerals, technology, consumer products, management services, and manufacturing sectors with the goal of ensuring investment diversification.” [[About](#),” Mentor Capital, Inc., accessed 05/27/20]

CanB Corp. “Offers Several Lines Of Branded CBD Products Including Tinctures, Salves, Topicals, Skin Care Products.” [[Mission Statement](#),” CanB Corp., accessed 05/27/20]

CbdMD Produces CBD Products. “Our goal has always been to produce the industry’s absolute highest-quality CBD while using state-of-the-art production and manufacturing techniques.” [[Our Mission](#),” cbdMD, accessed 05/27/20]

22nd Century Group Develops “New Hemp/Cannabis Research Technologies, Patents, And Plant Varieties.” “In our own labs and in partnership with some of the world’s leading plant scientists, 22nd Century is developing new hemp/cannabis research technologies, patents, and plant varieties.” [[Company Profile/Mission](#),” 22nd Century Group, Inc., accessed 05/27/20]

Charlie’s Holdings, Inc. Produces “Hemp-Derived, CBD Wellness Liquid” Products. “Charlie’s Holdings, Inc. (OTC Pink: CHUC) is an industry leader in the premium, nicotine-only, e-cigarette and hemp-derived, CBD wellness liquid spaces through its subsidiary companies Charlie’s Chalk Dust, LLC and Don Polly, LLC.” [[Home](#),” Charlie’s Holdings Inc., accessed 05/27/20]

MedTainer Inc. Produces Cannabis Packaging. “Even when it became apparent to us that this would be a protracted examination we never for a moment slackened the pace of our business, earning new clients, expanding our role in compliant cannabis and medical packaging and looking to expand into new markets.” [[MedTainer Inc.: Letter to Shareholders from Curt Fairbrother, CEO](#),” *GlobeNewswire*, 12/23/19]

PPP Provides Forgivable Loans To Small Businesses Struggling During The Coronavirus Pandemic.

The Paycheck Protection Program Is Intended To Assist Small Businesses Struggling During The Coronavirus Pandemic. “The Paycheck Protection Program provides small businesses with funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs including benefits. Funds can also be used to pay interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. [...] Funds are provided in the form of loans that will be fully forgiven when used for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities (due to likely high subscription, at least 75% of the forgiven amount must have been used for payroll). Loan payments will also be deferred for six months. No collateral or personal guarantees are required. Neither the government nor lenders will charge small businesses any fees.” [[Small Business Paycheck Protection Program](#),” U.S. Department of Treasury, accessed 05/27/20]

Meanwhile, 40,000 U.S. Inmates Serving Time For Cannabis Charges Face Heightened Risk As Coronavirus Spreads Through Prisons, Killing 415 And Infecting At Least 29,000 Out Of The Millions Currently In Confinement.

There Are About 40,000 People Being Held For Cannabis Charges In The U.S., Although 33 States Have Deemed The Substance Medicinal Or Recreational.

Across The Country, There Are About 40,000 People Being Held In Confinement For Cannabis Charges. “If we just look at cannabis — considered a recreational or medicinal plant in 33 states and DC, and a controlled substance in 17 states — there are 40,000 people across the country being held for possessing or distributing marijuana.” [Morgan Simon, “[COVID-19 Social Distancing Guidelines Are Incompatible With Overpopulated U.S. Prisons](#),” *Forbes*, 03/17/20]

While Cannabis Is Deemed Medicinal Or Recreational In 33 States, Other States Levy Harsh Penalties For Possession Or Distribution Of The Substance. “In those 33 states, possessing 2.5 pounds of cannabis likely means you’re an entrepreneur, a healthcare provider, or simply the life of the party. In states like Louisiana, it could mean a 10-year prison sentence.” [Morgan Simon, “[COVID-19 Social Distancing Guidelines Are Incompatible With Overpopulated U.S. Prisons](#),” *Forbes*, 03/17/20]

At Least 415 Prisoners Have Died From COVID-19 And More Than 29,000 Have Tested Positive As The Virus Threatens To Spread Quickly Among The Millions Confined In U.S. Facilities.

At Least 415 U.S. Prisoners Have Died From COVID-19 And More Than 29,000 Have Tested Positive For The Virus, As Of The Week of May 20, 2020. “Across the nation, at least 415 prisoners had died of the infection as of the week of May 20, and more than 29,000 had tested positive, according to the Marshall Project. The American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups have called for the early release of some prisoners, especially the old and sick.” [Jake Harper, “[As COVID-19 Cuts Deadly Path Through Indiana Prisons, Inmates Say Symptoms Ignored](#),” *NPR*, 05/26/20]

Across The Country, “Millions Of People Are Involuntarily Gathered In Close Proximity” In Correctional Facilities Or Detention Centers Where COVID-19 Can Spread Quickly. “At a time when across the country, states are limiting gatherings of over 250 people and those who can are choosing to self-quarantine, there’s one place where millions of people are involuntarily gathered in close proximity — our nation’s prisons and immigrant detention centers. An epidemiologist at Brown University has recommended that the United States could release close to 44,000 detained immigrants who are being held for civil, not criminal, infractions. This would not only prevent the ability of COVID-19 to spread as quickly, but also save critical government resources at a time when we need every dollar we can get to fight the spread of the disease.” Morgan Simon, “[COVID-19 Social Distancing Guidelines Are Incompatible With Overpopulated U.S. Prisons](#),” *Forbes*, 03/17/20]

At Least 1,700 Inmates Federal Custody Have Tested Positive For COVID-19.

As Of May 21, 2020, The Bureau Of Prisons “Reported That 1,735 Federal Inmates Had Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Tests And 59 Inmates Have Died.” [Ryan J. Reilly, “[Man Serving 18 Years On Marijuana Charges Just Died In Federal Prison COVID-19 Outbreak](#),” *Huffington Post*, 05/22/20]

Some Of The First U.S. Inmates To Die Of COVID-19 Were Serving Time For Non-Violent Drug Charges.

Patrick Jones, The First U.S. Prisoner To Die Of COVID-19, Was Serving A 27-Year Sentence For Non-Violent Drug Charges.

Patrick Jones, The First U.S. Prisoner To Die Of COVID-19, Was Serving A 27-Year Sentence For Non-Violent Drug Charges. “In fact, the very first prisoner in the United States to succumb to the disease was a man named Patrick Jones who was serving 27 years in a federal penitentiary for a non-violent drug offense. While Mr. Jones was not incarcerated for a cannabis offense, it is only a matter of time before a non-violent cannabis prisoner faces the same fate.” [Kris Krane, “[A Cannabis Offense Should Never Be A Death Sentence](#),” *Forbes*, 04/15/20]

Andrea Circle Bear, The First Female Federal Prisoner To Die Of COVID-19, Was Serving A Two-Year Sentence For A Nonviolent Drug Offense.

Andrea Circle Bear, The First Woman To Die Of COVID-19 While In Federal Custody Was Serving A Two-Year Sentence For Nonviolent Drug Offense That “Ended Up Being A Death Peanlty.” “Andrea Circle Bear, the first female federal prisoner to succumb to the novel coronavirus [...] Circle Bear, who was Native, was serving a two-year sentence for a nonviolent drug offense. ‘She was serving a 26-month sentence that ended up being a death penalty,’ Crear-Perry said. She and other criminal reform advocates are shocked by the senselessness of her death.” [Tana Ganeva, “[Death Of New Mother At Federal Prison Hospital Prompts Calls For Accountability In Texas](#),” *The Appeal*, 05/06/20]

Circle Bear Died Shortly After Giving Birth While In Prison—She Had To Undergo A “Cesarean Section” Because It’s Impossible For A Mother To Push On A Ventilator. “Andrea Circle Bear ... was eight-and-a-half months pregnant in late March when she was sent to FMC Carswell, a prison medical facility in Texas. When she went into labor on April 1, a cesarean section was performed, because it’s impossible for a mother to push on a ventilator. While her baby was delivered safely, Circle Bear died last week of complications related to COVID-19. She was 30 years old.” [Tana Ganeva, “[Death Of New Mother At Federal Prison Hospital Prompts Calls For Accountability In Texas](#),” *The Appeal*, 05/06/20]

One Man Died Of COVID-19 In Prison Shortly Before Finishing An 18-Year Sentence For Cannabis Charges—An Advocate Said He Was “A Poster Child” For Being Sent Home To Finish His Sentence.

Fidel Torres, Who Died In Prison From COVID-19, Was Nearly Finished A Near-Two Decade Prison Sentence For Cannabis Charges—He Was Called “A Poster Child” For Home Confinement During The Pandemic.

Fidel Torres, Who Was Less Than Two Years From Finishing An 18-Year Sentence For Marijuana Charges, Died From Being Exposed To COVID-19 In Prison. “The most recent inmate to die as the COVID-19 crisis rips through the federal prison system is a 62-year-old who had less than two years left on an 18-year sentence for marijuana charges. Fidel Torres was sentenced to 220 months in prison way back in 2006 after he waived a jury trial and let a judge decide his fate.” [Ryan J. Reilly, “[Man Serving 18 Years On Marijuana Charges Just Died In Federal Prison COVID-19 Outbreak](#),” *Huffington Post*, 05/22/20]

A Decarceration Advocate Called Torres “A Poster Child For Home Confinement” As He Called On The Federal Bureau Of Prisons To Do More To Protect Inmates From The Pandemic. “Advocates like Ring say that cases like Torres’ show that the federal Bureau of Prisons needs to do more to expand home confinement to save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. [...] ‘Fidel Torres was 62 years old and was nearing the end of a lengthy sentence for selling marijuana. He seems like a poster child for home confinement,’ [Decarceration Advocate Kevin] Ring told HuffPost.” [Ryan J. Reilly, “[Man Serving 18 Years On Marijuana Charges Just Died In Federal Prison COVID-19 Outbreak](#),” *Huffington Post*, 05/22/20]

Another Man Is “Scared For His Life” By The Pandemic As He Serves A Life Sentence For Selling \$20 Worth Of Cannabis A Dozen Years Ago.

Fate Vincent Winslow Is Serving A Life Sentence In Louisiana For Selling \$20 Worth Of Cannabis In 2008—Winslow Is Now “Scared For His Life” As His Prison Disregards Health Precautions During The Pandemic.

Fate Vincent Winslow Is Serving A Life Sentence In Louisiana After Selling \$20 Worth Of Cannabis To An Undercover Officer In 2008. “Fate Vincent Winslow, 52, is serving life without parole at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as Angola. Winslow’s crime was selling \$20 worth of weed to an undercover police officer in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 2008.” [Tana Ganeva, “[At Angola, Coronavirus Turns Life Without Parole for Selling Weed Into a Potential Death Sentence](#),” *Reason*, 05/27/20]

- **Winslow Was Sentenced To “Life Imprisonment” After Violating The State’s “Habitual Offender” Law For Selling What One Juror Called A “Ridiculously Small” Amount Of Cannabis.** “Winslow, who is black, was found guilty by a predominantly white jury. One juror felt bad when she recalled that the amount of pot Winslow had sold was ‘ridiculously small.’ Still, thanks to Louisiana’s habitual offender law, once prosecutors had secured his guilty verdict in the \$20 pot sale, Winslow was automatically sentenced to ‘life imprisonment at hard labor without benefit of parole, probation or suspension of sentence’ and sent to Angola.” [Tana Ganeva, [“At Angola, Coronavirus Turns Life Without Parole for Selling Weed Into a Potential Death Sentence,” Reason, 05/27/20](#)]

During The Pandemic, Winslow Is “Scared For His Life” In His Prison, Which He Says Disregards Safety And Health Precautions. “In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Winslow is scared for his life. The prison packs dozens of men into each sleeping dorm each night and doesn’t let them adhere to social distancing guidelines during the day. ‘Yes, we eat together,’ Winslow tells *Reason*. ‘Everybody bunch up and we still get one bar of soap a week, watered-down bleach with no smell ... no kind of sanitizer at all ... no doctor to check on you. So all you can do is a lot of praying.’” [Tana Ganeva, [“At Angola, Coronavirus Turns Life Without Parole for Selling Weed Into a Potential Death Sentence,” Reason, 05/27/20](#)]

Yet Another Inmate, A Senior Citizen Suffering From “A Long List Of Ailments,” Remains In His Prison’s Pandemic Lockdown After Serving Time For Cannabis Charges Since 1996.

John Knock, A 71-Year Old New Jersey Prisoner Who Suffers From “A Long List Of Ailments,” Remains In Prison During The Pandemic After Serving Time For Cannabis Charges Since 1996.

John Knock, A 71-Year Old New Jersey Inmate Who’s Been In Prison Since 1996 For Cannabis-Related Charges, Requested Early Release Long Before The COVID-19 Pandemic. “Last October, several months before the global pandemic forced prisons to lock down, a 71-year-old inmate at a New Jersey federal prison made an urgent plea to be released. In prison for nearly 25 years, he said he was aging with a long list of medical ailments and a deep desire to reunite with his family.” [Joe Atmonavage, [“He was a big-time pot trafficker, now aging in a N.J. prison. Should he get released amid the coronavirus outbreak?,” NJ.com, 04/23/20](#)]

- **Knock Received Two Life Sentences for Cannabis Trafficking Charges, Which He Expressed Remorse For.** “John Knock received two life sentences for his role in a ‘massive’ marijuana trafficking conspiracy in which prosecutors estimate he could have made as much as \$200 million from. Knock, who has been incarcerated since 1996, has acknowledged his part and expressed his regret for it.” [Joe Atmonavage, [“He was a big-time pot trafficker, now aging in a N.J. prison. Should he get released amid the coronavirus outbreak?,” NJ.com, 04/23/20](#)]

Knock’s Request For Early Release Was Denied On He Basis He “Wasn’t Sick Enough,” And Now He Remains In Prison During The Pandemic As A “Chronic Care” Inmate With A “Long List Of Ailments.” “Two months later, the warden denied the request saying Knock wasn’t sick enough. ‘You are not experiencing physical or mental health that substantially diminishes your ability to function in a correctional facility,’ the denial said. Knock now sits in his prison cell for nearly 24 hours a day, as federal prisons across the country have been ordered to lock down to prevent a coronavirus outbreak. He’s considered a ‘chronic care’ inmate and has a long list of ailments that come from inadequate prison health care over the years, according to his attorney.” [Joe Atmonavage, [“He was a big-time pot trafficker, now aging in a N.J. prison. Should he get released amid the coronavirus outbreak?,” NJ.com, 04/23/20](#)]