



The Big Payback

Drug War Reparations Now!

www.eatchicago.org



Who We are

The Big Payback is a campaign led by Equity and Transformation (EAT) and stewarded by the Illinois Reparations Coalition (IRC). The IRC is made up of over 17 organizations committed to winning Drug War reparations in Illinois.

Mission

Our mission is to win comprehensive reparations for survivors of the War on Drugs

Vision

We envision a just conclusion to the War on Drugs in the State of Illinois. We demand the State acknowledges their direct involvement in the gross violation of human rights during the War on Drugs, compensate the survivors, provide rehabilitation services to affected communities, restore rights that were taken away, and implement policy to guarantee non-repetition.

Positioning

On May 31st, 2019, Illinois became the 11th State to legalize cannabis. The recreational cannabis tax act (HB-1438) was praised for being one of the most "Equity-Centric Policies" in the nation and the first to incorporate reparations for the War on Drugs. Sadly, there has been little progress in advancing racial equity in the cannabis industry, and reparations for the War on Drugs have been abandoned altogether.

Because of the war on drugs, we have laws and rules that double down on punishment and attempts to control people. This "drug war logic" means low-income people are denied food stamps and public assistance for past drug convictions, people who are even suspected of using drugs are evicted from public housing and discriminated against in the private housing sector, qualified people have to pass a drug test unrelated to their employment before they are offered a job, millions of dollars have been extracted from Black communities, and thousands of families have been separated.

Furthermore, in 2020, the State of Illinois reported \$582 million in revenue, yet; there isn't a single black-owned cannabis dispensary in IL. In 2020, out of the 2,991 cannabis arrests, 75% of those detained were Black. Many Black Illinois residents from low-income communities are essentially priced out of the recreational cannabis market. They simply can't afford to consume or sell legally, forcing many to the informal cannabis market where they face increased chances of being arrested.

If cannabis legalization is "about reparations," then it's time for Illinois to commit to reparations. From top to bottom, we have to stop paying lip service about reparations and fully acknowledge the state's involvement in the gross violation of human rights that occurred during the War on Drugs.

Problems

- From the introduction of the War on Drugs in 1979 to the height of the crack epidemic in 2009, the private prison industry grew by 1,600%.
- Millions of dollars have been extracted from Black communities through the War on Drugs aiding the racial wealth gap in IL.
- The very presence of a drug arrest or charge can be an automatic barrier to employment
- Thousands of Illinois residents have lost their housing due to the War on Drugs.
- One positive drug test is enough for an Illinois resident to lose their welfare benefits
- Pregnant people, especially low-income people of color, are routinely drug tested, often without their consent.
- Survivors from the War on Drugs, many of whom are residents returning from incarceration face higher barriers to obtaining gainful employment, student loans or housing, and other forms of participation in civic life.
- In 2020, out of the 2,991 cannabis arrests, 75% of those detained were Black.
- To this day, there isn't a single Black-owned cannabis dispensary in Illinois.

Solution (Reparations)

- Restitution and Repatriation: Restitution means to "re-establish the situation which existed before the wrongful act was committed". Changes traced to the wrongful act are reversed through the restoration of freedom, recognition of humanity, identity, culture, repatriation, livelihood, citizenship, legal standing, and wealth to the extent they can be, and if they cannot, restitution is completed by compensation.
- Compensation: Should be provided for any economically assessable damage.
- Guarantee Non-Repetition: Reviewing and reforming laws contributing to or allowing for the continuation of the war on drugs in IL.
- Rehabilitation should include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.
- Satisfaction is part of full reparation under international law for moral damage, such as "emotional injury, mental suffering, and injury to reputation." In some instances where cessation, restitution, and compensation do not bring full repair, satisfaction is also needed.

Survivors of the War on Drugs include individuals whose lives have been adversely altered by targeted Drug War policy that includes incarceration of self or family, loss of custody of a child, loss of housing, denied access to employment, education and financial assistance such as loans.