

Commonwealth of Virginia

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

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COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY DESCANO OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Regarding the Virginia General Assembly's Passage of Legislation Decriminalizing Possession of Marijuana

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA – Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano released the following statement regarding the Virginia General Assembly's passage of legislation decriminalizing the possession of marijuana through both chambers:

"I'm proud of the General Assembly's move to decriminalize possession of marijuana in Virginia. I look forward to seeing what the final version of this decriminalization legislation will look like. I ran for Commonwealth's Attorney on a platform of commonsense, progressive criminal justice reform measures that represent this community's values. On hour one of day one on the job I did my part by ceasing the prosecution of adults for simple possession of marijuana. Now, the General Assembly has done their part by passing this reform for the entire Commonwealth," said Descano.

Following decisive numbers in favor of Mr. Descano's policy initiatives in November's election, Commonwealth's Attorney Descano enacted his new policy to not prosecute adults for simple possession of marijuana immediately upon taking office. To date, there have already been approximately 650 adult cases of simple possession of marijuana that have not been prosecuted under this new policy in Fairfax County.

"Sending individuals to jail and saddling them with a lifetime of limited opportunities because of a criminal record due to simple possession of marijuana is not in line with our community's values—it's a clear waste of resources and does not make us any safer. That's why I not only brought this much-needed reform to Fairfax County, but also traveled down to Richmond three times this legislative session to advocate for greater reform. I spoke to members of the General Assembly and made sure the message of reform the voters of Fairfax County entrusted with me was heard across Virginia. I applaud the General Assembly's work and look forward to tackling the next necessary reform," said Commonwealth's Attorney Descano.

This legislation has passed both chambers of the General Assembly and now awaits reconciliation and the Governor's signature. Mr. Descano's policy on simple possession of marijuana is just one of several reforms he identified and campaigned on. He plans to continue to roll out his reforms over the course of the coming weeks and months.

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