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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ ASKS COURT TO DISMISS
THOUSANDS OF MARIJUANA CASES**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz appeared virtually today in Queens Criminal Court to request that thousands of marijuana cases be dismissed and sealed.

District Attorney Katz said, “For many years, I have advocated for the decriminalization of recreational marijuana use and other low-level, marijuana-related offenses. Since taking office, I have declined to prosecute these cases for the significant reason that criminalization of marijuana had a disproportionate impact on communities of color. The recent marijuana legislation was long overdue. Today’s proceeding is another step in our continued pursuit of justice and equity for all.”

Three months ago, DA Katz also requested that the Court dismiss and seal hundreds of loitering for the purpose of prostitution offenses. Penal Law 240.37 - another law that had recently been repealed by the Legislature – far too often targeted women, trans people and people of color solely based on their appearance.

“Today’s application to the Court is another step to right a wrong. This Office is committed to dispensing justice in a fair and equitable manner for all.”

Before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jerry Iannece today, DA Katz requested the Court dismiss:

- 894 cases involving defendants who are awaiting arraignment, have cases presently pending in Criminal Court, have previously pled guilty to marijuana charges, and/or have outstanding warrants for marijuana and marijuana-related offenses. The DA requested that all warrants be vacated and the cases dismissed and sealed.
- 2,361 cases where defendants were issued summonses for marijuana offenses and currently have outstanding warrants. The DA asked the Court to vacate the warrants and to dismiss and seal the cases.

DA Katz thanked Judge Iannece as well as the Queens Criminal Court Chief Administrative Judge Joanne B. Watters, and the Queens Criminal Court Clerk’s Office and the Office of Court Administration for their cooperation with the morning’s application to the Court.

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