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**Cannabis Industry Group Partners with Latino Community Advocates to Educate About Cannabis Laws and Non-Citizens**

Denver, CO - A recent increase in marijuana-related deportations for legal permanent residents and other immigrants, including people married to U.S. residents for less than two years, has prompted community-based Servicios de la Raza and Marijuana Industry Group to partner on an education video targeting non-citizens. The purpose of the video is to help explain to non-citizens that marijuana, which is legalized in Colorado and other states, remains a federal Schedule I substance and is therefore illegal to grow, possess, sell, or consume. The video (<https://youtu.be/UsAdoENvw2E>) reminds audiences that a violation of any federal law may have serious ramifications, including deportation.

“We work on the ground, in the community and have seen firsthand the positive effects of marijuana tax dollars on community programs, and marijuana creating job opportunities and helping people get off of opioids. When we started hearing about legal-permanent residents and other immigrants being deported for using marijuana, or for having images of marijuana on social media or cell phones, we reached out to our partners at Marijuana Industry Group. We realized that most people living in Colorado or other states where marijuana is legal do not know the difference between state and federal laws, and may unknowingly be putting their immigration or residency status at risk,” says Servicios de la Raza executive director and third-generation community advocate Rudy Gonzales.

Marijuana Industry Group executive director Kristi Kelly immediately offered to assist in raising awareness about the issue. “The legal and licensed businesses in the cannabis industry are parts of the communities in which they operate. MIG’s goal is to use safe regulation and education to help businesses and communities be successful. To the extent there is a gap in that education, particularly one of such significant human consequence, we have a responsibility to address it. We wanted to educate about laws and minimize accidental deportation.”



In 2016, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported over 240,000 undocumented immigrants. While not all of these were related to cannabis, possession, confession or use of even small amounts of cannabis can result in detainment or deportation by ICE or Customs and Border Agents. An investigation tactic that has increased 1,150% is the use of mobile devices and cell phones. Chris Roberts of Leafly reported that in 2010 border agents searched fewer than 400 cell phones per month. In February 2017, agents searched an estimated 5,000 cell phones, looking for evidence of law-breaking activities, including anything alluding to the use or possession of statewide legal cannabis.

The collaborative video was produced in-house by Marijuana Industry Group staff, with translation and talent services provided by Servicios de la Raza, and will be used in the field and be available online for any interested parties.

A press event will be held on Wednesday December 13th at 10:30 am at the Servicios de La Raza Conference Room located at 3131 West 14th Avenue, Denver, CO, 80212.

**About Servicios de la Raza (SDLR)**

*Servicios de La Raza's mission is to provide and advocate for culturally responsive, essential human services and opportunities. These services are intended to assist low-income members of the community in overcoming the range of problems that result in a lack of resources and contribute to the perpetuation of the vicious cycle of poverty. Because of the value placed on community, culture, and language, Servicios de La Raza serves as an integral part of the heart of the Latino community in Metro Denver, a trusted and accessible community resource strategically linked with many of Metro Denver's schools and churches. Equally important, Servicios de La Raza is also a primary service referral channel for many human services agencies and institutions in the Metro Denver region as they encounter Latino clientele.*

**About Marijuana Industry Group (MIG)**

*Marijuana Industry Group (MIG) is the leading cannabis trade association for Colorado's licensed businesses. MIG was founded in 2010 by cannabis business owners and supporters to help craft Colorado's earliest medical marijuana regulatory framework – which was the world's first licensed, taxed and regulated model. MIG has cultivated strong relationships at the highest levels of state and local government, allowing for real-time education, access, and advancement of practical policy. As the oldest, largest, and most diverse trade association in the state, MIG represents the interests of, and advocates on behalf of, the rapidly evolving needs of the leaders of regulated marijuana industry in Colorado.*

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