



## **The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation's Hawthorne Social Justice Fund and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation announce funding of John R. Lewis Social Justice Fellows**

February 2, 2022

### **Effort will support four fellows to focus on cannabis policy and social justice reforms**

PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y., Feb. 02, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Hawthorne Gardening Company, a subsidiary of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, today announced that the Hawthorne Social Justice Fund has committed to a multi-year sponsorship of the John R. Lewis Social Justice Fellows program within the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.

The Hawthorne Social Justice Fund, part of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, is providing \$600,000 over two years to support four John R. Lewis Social Justice Fellows to focus on research related to cannabis policy and social justice reforms and propose solutions to Congress. It is the largest single grant award to date of the Hawthorne Social Justice Fund, created in 2021 to support nonprofits devoted to social justice. Additionally, these are the first John R. Lewis fellows dedicated to cannabis issues.

"We're delighted to partner with the Hawthorne Social Justice Fund in support of the John R. Lewis Social Justice Fellowship as we cultivate and equip early-career policy professionals and create a pipeline of young Black leaders," said Paul Dumars, co-interim president and CEO, CFO and COO of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

As North America's leader in indoor and hydroponic growing solutions, Hawthorne Gardening has sought to use its influence and resources to help shape criminal justice reform related to cannabis prohibition and create a more equitable post-prohibition cannabis industry. Since the establishment of the Hawthorne Social Justice Fund with a \$2.5 million contribution from Hawthorne Gardening Company, more than half has been given to worthy nonprofits around the country.

"There is no doubt that cannabis laws have led to systemic racial and social inequities, and we are grateful to be able to join with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in finding ways to address this critical issue," said Chris Hagedorn, division president of Hawthorne Gardening Company and executive vice president of ScottsMiracle-Gro. "We're also proud to be affiliated with a program named for John Lewis, whose lifelong commitment to social justice continues to inspire millions of Americans. It is our hope the four John Lewis fellows will inform the debate related to cannabis reform and work directly with policy makers in establishing a framework for impactful and positive change in Black communities."

Fellows funded by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation's Hawthorne Social Justice Fund must demonstrate a commitment to creating and implementing public policy to improve living conditions for underserved and underrepresented people. Candidates must have at least five years of policy development, community activism or grassroots organizing in a leadership position, or, preferably, a graduate or professional degree completed prior to the fellowship start date. The fellows will work in Congress and as researchers in the Center for Policy Analysis and Research to analyze cannabis policy and social justice issues at large and criminal justice reform, in particular, through the lens of education, economic opportunity, incarceration, courts and law enforcement. Examples include reforms such as decriminalization, expungement, sentencing and incarceration; hurdles federal law presents for the emerging regulation of cannabis by states; and black wealth creation and solutions for supporting licensed ownership and successful operation of businesses in the emerging cannabis industry.

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is accepting and reviewing applications for the first two fellows, who will start on September 12, 2022. The deadline to apply is May 6, 2022, by visiting the [application page](#).

### **About The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation**

The mission of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation is to inspire, connect and cultivate a community of purpose. The Foundation is deeply rooted in helping create healthier communities, empower the next generation and preserve our planet. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that funds nonprofit entities that support its core initiatives in the form of grants, endowments and multi-year capital gifts. For more information, visit [www.scottsmiraclegrofoundation.org](http://www.scottsmiraclegrofoundation.org) and the [Hawthorne Social Justice Fund](#).

### **About the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation**

Since its establishment in 1976, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation has made significant progress in its efforts to develop leaders, inform public policy and educate the public. Critical focus areas are education, public health, economic development/empowerment and the environment. The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation launched the John R. Lewis Social Justice Fellowship in 2020 in response to the protests of police killings of unarmed Black Americans and the historically unlevel playing field for minorities. Its mission is to combat systemic injustice and advance racial equity, human rights, education and community and economic development opportunities for the Black community. The late U.S. Rep. John R. Lewis was a leader in Congress and the fight for racial equity. The program is designed to give young Black leaders the opportunity to work in Congress, and fellows are placed with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

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