Only 23 states allow citizen-initiated ballot initiatives, meaning in most states the only way to reform marijuana laws is via the legislature. With polls showing that 68% of Americans support making marijuana use legal and around 90% support allowing medical marijuana, lawmakers are increasingly getting the message that constituents want them to act on sensible and humane marijuana policies.

This year, lawmakers have introduced dozens of bills to improve cannabis policies. On February 27, the Virginia General Assembly sent Gov. Ralph Northam twin legalization bills. He is expected to either sign them as-is or formally recommend amendments. Click on the state names below to learn more about efforts in your state and to take action in support of marijuana policy reform.

The crises our country is grappling with underscore the urgent need to end cannabis prohibition. As part of our national reckoning with racism and violent policing, it is essential that we end the war on cannabis, which includes hundreds of thousands of arrests each year and even more traumatizing searches based on the real or alleged smell of cannabis. Despite nearly identical use rates, Black Americans are 3.6 times as likely to be arrested for cannabis as whites.

In addition, in times of this pandemic, it is all the more apparent that finite government resources shouldn’t be wasted on cannabis prohibition. In these challenging times, states desperately need the good jobs, small businesses, and hundreds of millions in tax revenue that come with marijuana legalization.

Marijuana Legalization Legislation

States with bills to legalize — and in most cases regulate — marijuana for adults: 24

- **Connecticut** — S.B. 888 is Gov. Lamont’s bill to legalize and regulate cannabis for adults, H.B. 5853 is a shorter bill focused on equity and labor peace in legalization.
- **Florida** — H 291, H 343, H 1361, H 1597, S 664, and S 710 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults.
- **Georgia** — SB 263 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; HR 281 and SR 165 would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters.
- **Hawaii** — SB 767, HB 1202, HB 238, SB 1376, SB 704, and HB 7 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults. Several committees advanced SB 767 with amendments, and it now heads to a Senate floor vote.
- **Indiana** — HB 1154 and SB 87 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; SB 223 would legalize possession only; HB 1117 appears to remove penalties for possession or cultivation of
up to two ounces of marijuana.

- **Iowa** — SF 83 would legalize adults' possession of up to an ounce; HF 751 would legalize and regulate cannabis and expunge convictions.
- **Kentucky** — HB467 and HB461 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults.
- **Maryland** — HB 32 and SB 708 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults. HB 32 received a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on February 16, and SB 708 received a hearing in Senate Finance on March 4.
- **Minnesota** — SF 757, HF 151, and HF 600 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults. HF 600 has passed out of three committees as of March 8 — Finance and Policy; Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs; and Workforce and Business Development.
- **Mississippi** — SB 2768 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; SB 2164 would legalize cannabis; and SB 2585 would legalize possession of up to 2.5 ounces.
- **Missouri** — HB 325 and HB 263 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; HJR 30 would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters.
- **Nebraska** — LB5 46 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; LR2CA, if approved by the legislature, would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters.
- **New Hampshire** — HB 237 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; HB 629 would legalize personal possession and cultivation of cannabis. On January 27, 2021, the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee recommended retaining both bills, which would kill them for the year.
- **New Jersey** — A. 21, S. 21, and A. 1897 implement legalization (which more than two-thirds of voters approved in November 2020). The bills were signed by Gov. Murphy on February 22, 2021, along with a companion bill to set penalties for minors in possession of cannabis.
- **New Mexico** — HB 12, HB 17, SB 13, SB 288, and SB 363; the House of Representatives approved HB 12 on February 26 in a 39-31 vote.
- **New York** — A. 1248 and S. 854 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; A. 3009 and S. 2509 are comprehensive budget bills that include Gov. Cuomo’s proposal to legalize and regulate cannabis.
- **North Dakota** — HB 1420 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; HCR 3031, if approved by the legislature, would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters. The House of Representatives approved HB 1420 in a 56-38 vote on February 23, 2021.
- **Oklahoma** — HB 1961, if approved by the legislature, would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters.
- **South Carolina** — S 335 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; also, S 268 would create an advisory referendum on legalization in 2022.
- **Tennessee** — HB 413 and SB 1439 would remove all penalties for possession of up to an ounce of cannabis. They would not legalize sales or manufacture.
- **Texas** — HB 447, SB 140, and SB 269 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; SJR 16 and HJR 13, if approved by the legislature, would refer a constitutional amendment on legalizing cannabis to voters.
- **Virginia** — SB 1406, HB 2312, SB 1243, HB 1815, and HB 269 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults; SB 1406 and HB 2312 passed both chambers in their final form on February 27; they are headed to Gov. Northam's desk.
- **West Virginia** — HB 2291 and HB 2912 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults.
- **Wyoming** — HB 209 would legalize and regulate cannabis for adults.

Several other states will have cannabis legalization and regulation bills introduced as well, including **Delaware** and **Rhode Island**.
Meanwhile, 15 states have already passed laws to legalize and regulate cannabis: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington. All but two — Illinois and Vermont — were by ballot initiative.

**Bills to Remove Possible Jail Time — Often Imposing a Fine — for Simple Possession (“Decriminalization”)**

States with decriminalization bills: 9

- **Alabama** — SB 149 reduces the penalty for cannabis possession to a fine; for up to two ounces, the penalty would be a civil fine of up to $250; it advanced out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 3.
- **Florida** — H 1215 would impose a civil fine of $100 or 10 hours of community service, plus court costs, for possession of up to 20 grams.
- **Indiana** — HB 1028 makes up to 30 grams a Class D infraction.
- **Iowa** — HF 648 would remove jail time for possession, but would impose a misdemeanor conviction and a hefty fine of between $105 and $855; SB 407 would reduce various penalties involving cannabis, including reducing the penalty for adults 21 and older possessing up to a half ounce of cannabis to a $100 civil fine.
- **Pennsylvania** — SB 107 would reclassify possession of a small amount of marijuana from a misdemeanor to a summary offense carrying a $25 fine. Public use would be a $100 fine.
- **South Carolina** — H 3228 (civil citation for up to 28 grams) and H 3571 (civil citation for up to 28 grams, penalty decrease for other drug offenses).
- **Texas** — HB 169 and HB 99 (make possession of up to two ounces a fine-only misdemeanor not subject to arrest); HB 585 and HB 616 (make possession of up to two ounces a fine-only misdemeanor not subject to arrest, unless it’s a fourth or subsequent offense in 24 months); HB 441 and HB 498 (make possession of up to an ounce a fine-only misdemeanor).
- **West Virginia** — SB 26 does not yet have text, but its summary says, "limiting penalty for possession of marijuana to no more than $1,000 without confinement."
- **Wisconsin** — AB 130 and SB 164 would reduce the penalty for up to 10 grams of cannabis to a fine of up to $100.

**Thirty-one states** and Washington, D.C. have decriminalized or legalized marijuana possession.

**Effective Medical Marijuana Bills**

States with bills to create comprehensive medical cannabis programs: 11

- **Alabama** — SB 46
- **Georgia**
- **Idaho** — H 108
- **Indiana** — HB 1026, HB 1214, HB 1547, and SB 321
- **Kansas** — SB 92, HB 2184, and SB 287
- **Kentucky** — HB 136, SB 92
- **Nebraska** — LB 474
• **South Carolina** — S. 150, H. 3361
• **Tennessee** — SB 25, HB 601, HB 621, HB 666, SB 25, and SB 854
• **Texas** — HB 43, HB 809, HB 94, SB 250, SB 90; also HJR 11 and HJR 28, if enacted by the legislature, would refer constitutional amendments on medical cannabis to voters.
• **Wisconsin** — AB 68 and SB 111 are the governor's budget bills, which propose a medical cannabis program.

**Thirty-six states.** D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have effective medical marijuana laws. Three additional states — Georgia, Iowa, and Texas — have more limited laws that allow regulated access to low-THC medical cannabis preparations.

**Don't see your state?**

If you live in a state that still prohibits marijuana and no lawmakers have taken the lead to change that, send your state legislators a note to ask them to stand up for humane and sensible marijuana policies. Take a few moments to email them in support of **medical marijuana**, **decriminalization**, or **legalizing and regulating marijuana**. And wherever you live, please ask your member of **Congress and U.S. senators** to support legislation to protect individuals who are complying with state medical marijuana and legalization laws.