The U.S. House of Representatives is poised to vote on a bill that — if passed — would end cannabis prohibition by the federal government. Here is a breakdown of some of the key provisions in the measure, what’s going on, and what you can do to help.

What is the MORE Act?

The MORE Act — the Marijuana Opportunity, Reinvestment and Expungement Act — is historic in scope. It would end the criminalization of cannabis for adults by removing it from the list of controlled substances, eliminate related criminal penalties, and take several other major steps toward criminal justice reform, social justice, and economic development. The House version of the bill is on the move, with a positive committee vote in November 2019 and a vote on the House floor expected later in September.

Some background

The MORE Act is one of several federal cannabis reform bills being considered by Congress. The House version is sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler (D-NY), and the Senate version is sponsored by Vice Presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris.

Serious criminal justice reform cannot begin in our country without ending the war on cannabis. The MORE Act would remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act, striking at the core of its harmful status in federal law, and it would provide essential restorative justice provisions to begin to undo decades of harm caused by prohibition.

Key provisions

- Not only would the MORE Act end the criminalization of cannabis at the federal level going forward, it would also be retroactive. Cannabis arrests, charges, and convictions would be automatically expunged at no cost to the individual. (While an improvement, states could continue to criminalize cannabis.)
- The measure would impose a 5% tax on the retail sales of cannabis to go to the Opportunity Trust Fund.
  - Half of that amount would go to help disadvantaged communities in areas like job training, health education, and legal aid.
  - Other amounts would go to help new cannabis businesses run by those impacted by the war on cannabis.
• The MORE Act would create the Office of Cannabis Justice to oversee the social equity provisions in the law.
• The bill would ensure the federal government could not discriminate against people because of cannabis use, including earned benefits or immigrants at risk of deportation.
• The measure would open the door to research, better banking and tax laws, and help fuel economic growth as states are looking for financial resources.

How can you help?

Your representative will be voting on this measure, and now is the time for them to hear from you — a constituent. Please ask your representative for a “yes” vote on MORE if it is called for a vote.

We’ve made it simple: you can get an email message to your lawmaker in less than two minutes with this link. It’s an easy but powerful way to make your opinion known at a key moment. Reach out right now!

More background

Don Murphy, Director of Federal Policy for MPP, attended the MORE Act hearing before the House Judiciary Committee last November and spoke with C-SPAN about the measure. MPP Executive Director Steve Hawkins sent a letter to lawmakers in support of the legislation, available here.

Donate today!

As a nonprofit organization, MPP is fighting to end cannabis prohibition and the suffering caused by the war on marijuana. We rely on contributions from our supporters to sustain our mission. Click here to make a donation today. Onward!