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POLITICS

Florida Lawmaker Files Bill To Decriminalize All Currently Illicit Drugs



Published 4 days ago on November 29, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger**

A Florida lawmaker introduced a bill last week to decriminalize all currently illicit drugs, provide avenues for relief for those with existing drug-related convictions and promote harm reduction services.



Rep. Dotie Joseph (D) filed the legislation, titled the “Collateral Consequences of Convictions and Decriminalization of Cannabis and All Drugs Act” on Tuesday.

For marijuana specifically, it would make possession of up to one ounce a non-criminal violation punishable by a \$50 fine, rather than a misdemeanor offense. It would apply the same non-criminal penalty to delivery of up to an ounce of marijuana.

People with past convictions for those cannabis-related offenses would be eligible for automatic expungements if more than a year has elapsed since the date of the arrest.

The bill goes on to say that the legislature “intends the prioritization of rehabilitative health intervention in lieu of criminalization for personal usage of controlled substances, including but is not limited to stimulants including cocaine, methamphetamine, opioids, heroin, fentanyl, depressants or benzodiazepines, and other addictive controlled substance.”

To that end, crimes “associated with the personal usage and possession of controlled substances that do not involve production, distribution or sale shall be decriminalized in favor

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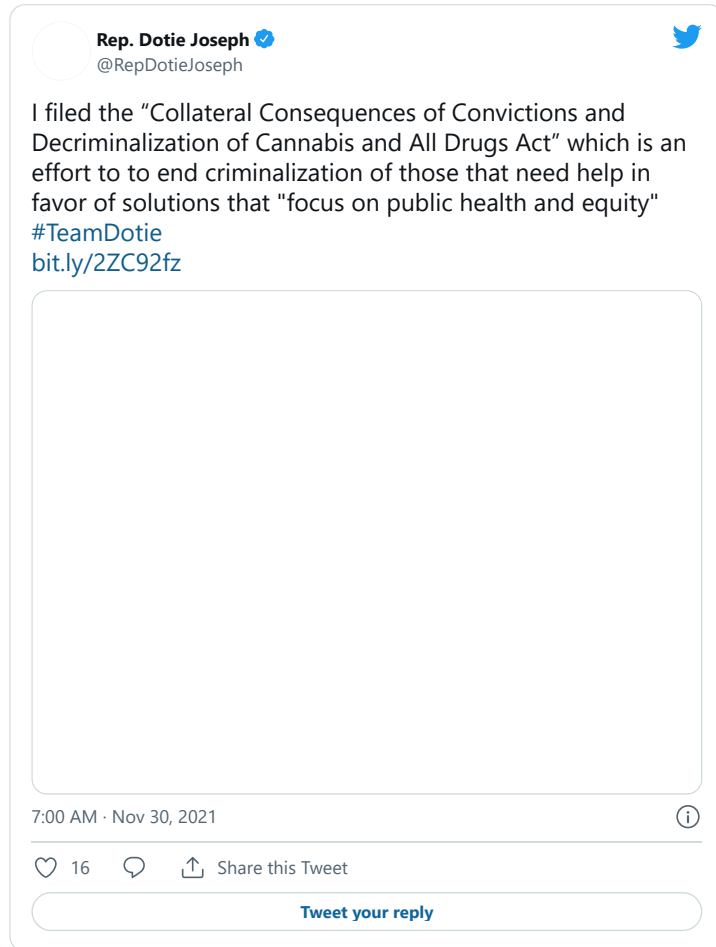
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or civil fines and referral for drug rehabilitation.”

“In the interest of the health and public safety of the residents of Florida, preserving individual freedoms without sacrificing community costs, allowing law enforcement to focus resources on violent and property crimes, generating revenue for education, substance abuse prevention and treatment, freeing public resources to invest in communities and other public purposes rather than continuing to overburden prisons with a population that needs medical attention, seeking corrective equity on the impact of the ‘war on drugs,’ and identifying real people-centered solutions to various drugs crises like the opioid epidemic, the Legislature is prioritizing treatment and safety in an effort to preserve lives rather than discard them through criminalization and incarceration.”

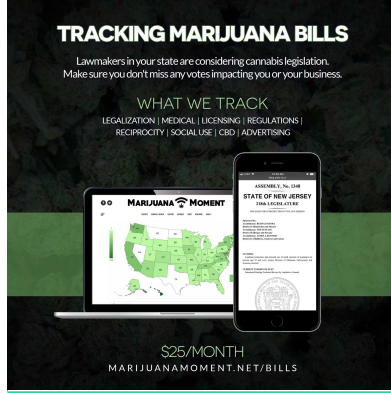
The legislation would further require the state health department to study “more effective methods of addressing drug addiction in lieu of criminalizing.”



“This study shall include but not be limited to supervised drug consumption facilities, which have been proven to reduce public disorder associated with drugs, and lead to a drop in the behaviors linked to HIV and Hepatitis C transmission,” the text states.

The department would be mandated to submit a report on its findings to the governor and legislative leaders by December 31, 2022.

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Marijuana Moment is already tracking more than 1,200 cannabis, psychedelics and drug policy bills in state legislatures and Congress this year. Patreon supporters pledging at least \$25/month get access to our interactive maps, charts and hearing calendar so they don't miss any developments.



Learn more about our [marijuana bill tracker](#) and become a [supporter on Patreon](#) to get access.

When it comes to collateral consequences of drug convictions, Joseph is proposing a prosecutorial policy change where people arrested for drug offenses are explicitly made aware of possible repercussions when it comes to housing and employment opportunities, student financial aid and voting rights.

Additionally, the legislation would amend statute to ensure that people who face convictions in other states or at the federal level do not face more severe penalties under Florida law.

It provides for a petition process through the Board of Executive Clemency for “a certificate of restoration of rights relieving collateral sanctions not sooner than 5 years after the individual’s most recent conviction of a felony or misdemeanor in any jurisdiction.”

This is yet another example of state legislators pursuing reform to end criminalization, with a focus on public health and equity.

For example, a young New Hampshire lawmaker is [pushing for the decriminalization of psilocybin](#) as well as all currently illicit substances.

Earlier this year, a 20-year-old Kansas lawmaker introduced [a bill to broadly decriminalize drug possession](#) in the state.

A coalition of drug reform advocates in Washington State announced in September that they’ll [seek to qualify a decriminalization measure](#) for the state’s 2022 ballot.

A task force based in Seattle, meanwhile, recently issued recommendations advising that local and municipal leaders [decriminalize psychedelics—and eventually consider legalizing all drugs](#).

In neighboring Oregon, voters approved two separate statewide initiatives in 2020, one [decriminalizing possession of all drugs](#) and another [to legalize psilocybin](#).

In May, lawmakers in Congress filed the [first-ever legislation to federally decriminalize possession](#) of illicit substances.

Back in Florida, activists filed a new petition in September to [put marijuana legalization on the 2022 ballot](#) after previous versions of the reform were [rejected by the state Supreme Court earlier this year](#).

Also in September, the top Democrat in the Florida Senate filed a bill that would require the state to [research the medical benefits of psychedelics](#) such as psilocybin and MDMA.

Pennsylvania's Lieutenant Governor Wants To Process As Many Marijuana Pardons As Possible Before Leaving Office

The lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania is stepping up his push to get marijuana records cleared, promoting an expedited petition program that he hopes will provide relief to thousands of people negatively impacted by prohibition. In an interview with KDKA that aired last week, Lt. Gov. John Fetterman (D) said one of his key goals in ...

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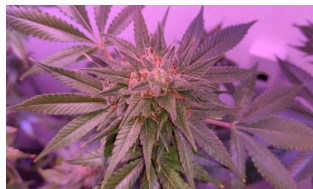
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Kyle Jaeger

Kyle Jaeger is Marijuana Moment's Sacramento-based senior editor. His work has also appeared in High Times, VICE and attn.

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White House Pressed To Mediate Marijuana Finger-Pointing Between DEA And HHS



Published 5 hours ago on December 3, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger**



With two federal agencies in disagreement about which of them is responsible for conducting an independent, peer-reviewed study on the medical potential of marijuana, a libertarian think tank is asking the White House to intervene and settle the dispute.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) sent a letter to a division of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Wednesday, asking that it settle a years-long dispute over an alleged violation of the Information Quality Act (IQA) regarding cannabis.

CEI has been pushing both the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to facilitate a peer review of the scientific

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Ohio Activists Prove Local Marijuana Decriminalization Initiative Had Enough Signatures To Make Ballot After Recount



Published 8 hours ago on December 3, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger**



Ohio marijuana activists have successfully proved that they turned in enough valid signatures to put a local decriminalization initiative before Kent voters after having missed the 2021 ballot due to a verification error on the part of county officials.

The Portage County Board of Elections initially told the Sensible Marijuana campaign that they were four signatures short of qualifying the measure to be voted on earlier this month. But activists were skeptical and did their own investigation, ultimately finding that officials incorrectly marked several signatures as invalid.

Mark Brown, a law professor at Capital University, had the idea to reach out to people whose

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POLITICS

Missouri GOP Lawmaker Files Joint Resolution To Put Marijuana Legalization On Ballot As Activists Launch Separate Campaign



Published 10 hours ago on December 3, 2021

By **Kyle Jaeger**



A Republican Missouri lawmaker is again making a push to place marijuana legalization on the ballot. But some activists aren't waiting on the legislature to take action to refer the issue to voters, with one campaign officially launching signature gathering on Wednesday for a separate reform initiative.

Rep. Shamed Dogan (R) on Wednesday pre-filed his joint resolution to place a constitutional amendment on legalization on the 2022 ballot. He [introduced a similar proposal last year](#), but it did not advance.

Under the lawmaker's plan, adults 21 and older could purchase, possess and cultivate cannabis

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