

# South Dakota Voters to Decide on Cannabis Legalization This November, State Officials Announce

## South Dakota Activists Secure Ballot Placement for Cannabis Legalization Initiative

*Pierre, SD, June 4, 2024* — South Dakota activists have successfully collected enough signatures to place a marijuana legalization initiative on the November ballot, as confirmed by the secretary of state's office on Monday.

### Signature Collection Success

Approximately a month after South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws (SDBML) submitted the petitions, Secretary of State Monae Johnson's (R) office announced that the campaign had gathered 22,558 valid signatures, surpassing the required threshold by about 5,000. This achievement marks a significant milestone for the grassroots campaign, which faced challenges due to limited national financial support.

### Measure 29 on the Ballot

The initiative, which will appear as Measure 29 on the ballot, proposes to allow adults 21 and older to purchase and possess up to two ounces of cannabis. It also permits the cultivation of up to six plants per person for personal use, with a maximum of 12 plants per shared household.

### Past Efforts and Legal Hurdles

Voters previously approved a marijuana legalization initiative in 2020, but it was later invalidated by the state Supreme Court over single-subject concerns. A second initiative in 2022 was rejected by voters. Despite these setbacks, SDBML has continued its efforts to bring legalization to the state.

### Campaign's Next Steps

"Qualifying for the ballot is an enormous accomplishment and one worth celebrating. But we need to get right back to work—Election Day is just five months away," Matthew Schweich, executive director of SDBML, said in an email blast to supporters on Monday. "Let's take the energy and momentum from our successful signature drive and channel it towards a victory this fall!"

### Public Opinion on Legalization

A recent poll indicated that 51 percent of South Dakotans planned to vote against the legalization measure, while 40 percent expressed support and 10 percent remained undecided. This is the third consecutive poll

showing the measure trailing among voters.

## **Competing and Opposing Measures**

Another proposed 2024 legalization ballot measure, sponsored by Rapid City resident Emmett Reistroffer, received its final ballot explanation from the state attorney general. However, Reistroffer has no plans to collect signatures or campaign for the measure. Additionally, opponents of legalization have filed two other proposed measures to tighten drug laws, including a repeal of the state's medical marijuana law and a prohibition on the legalization of federally banned substances by voters.

## **Medical Cannabis and Legislative Actions**

After voters approved medical cannabis legalization in 2020, efforts to delay implementation failed, and the state proceeded with the program. Currently, over 11,500 South Dakotans hold medical marijuana cards, nearly double the expected enrollment.

## **Looking Forward**

As Election Day approaches, SDBML aims to build on its momentum to secure voter approval for Measure 29, marking a potential turning point in South Dakota's cannabis policy.

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