

New Hampshire House Tables Cannabis Legalization Bill

The New Hampshire Senate approved a cannabis legalization bill, but the House voted to table it, effectively halting it for now. The legislation aimed to create a state-regulated system for cannabis sales, making New Hampshire the 25th state to legalize marijuana. Governor Chris Sununu, who is not seeking reelection, indicated he might sign the bill, though both leading Republican candidates oppose legalization. The bill's failure delays potential reform, leaving future efforts uncertain.

Senate Approval and Governor's Stance

[The New Hampshire Senate had approved the bill](#), bringing hope to many cannabis legalization advocates. Governor Sununu mentioned that New Hampshire “tried to take into consideration that if we’re going to do it, develop the best system not just in the region, but probably in the country,” emphasizing safety and minimizing children’s access to cannabis. Yet, this forward momentum was halted by the House’s decision.

Opposition in the House

Rep. Jared Sullivan (D), a vocal opponent of the bill, criticized the proposed legislation as “the most intrusive, big-government marijuana program proposed anywhere in the country.” Sullivan’s comments reflect a broader concern among some lawmakers about the bill’s structure and implications. He stated, “I must admit, 1633 is proving to be a pretty stubborn bill that refuses to die. I, like many in this room, seriously want to legalize cannabis sales in New Hampshire. But the fact is, despite the recent tweaks, this remains a terrible bill.”

Advocates' Disappointment

Karen O’Keefe, director of state policies for the Marijuana Policy Project, expressed disappointment: “It’s a sad day to see legalizers kill legalization. While HB 1633 was an imperfect bill, it is far easier to revise a law than to pass a bill from scratch—especially if the next governor is a prohibitionist.” O’Keefe’s comments underscore the frustration felt by many legalization advocates.

Support for Future Efforts

Rep. Erica Layon, who supported the compromise bill, voiced her support during public discussion saying, “We have the opportunity today to make history as the 25th state to legalize cannabis. Most of this bill won’t go into effect until 2026, which gives us more time to fight about some of the challenges and some of the concerns we have about this bill.” Layon’s remarks highlight the potential for future revisions and improvements to the bill.

Sen. Shannon Chandley (D) acknowledged that while the bill was not perfect, it represented a significant step forward. “At this point, it’s not perfect. We know that whenever we pass a major piece of legislation, it is

seldom perfect. We may need to revisit this, but right now, one of the things that I think is most important is that this bill does address what the people of our state want. More than 70 percent of our residents do not believe cannabis should be illegal,” she said.

The tabling of the cannabis legalization bill in New Hampshire delays potential reform, but continued support from residents and key lawmakers suggests the fight for legalization will continue.

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