

Congressional Committee Blocks D.C. Cannabis Sales Legalization

A GOP-controlled House committee has voted to maintain a federal ban blocking Washington, D.C. from creating a system of regulated adult-use marijuana sales. At a House Appropriations Committee hearing on Thursday, members approved an en bloc package of Republican amendments to the 2025 Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) spending legislation, reintroducing the D.C. cannabis rider that had been omitted at the subcommittee level.

Setback for Advocates

This decision marks another major setback for advocates, as the full committee also voted to remove a section of the bill that would've provided limited marijuana banking protections. Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH), co-chair of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus, said he intends to find alternative avenues for advancing cannabis banking legislation.

Historical Context and Opposition

The District has been barred from using its local tax dollars to legalize recreational cannabis sales since 2014, when Congress first adopted the rider from Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD). Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) expressed her outrage, stating she will work to remove anti-home rule riders as the bill progresses.

President Biden's Stance

President Joe Biden has consistently maintained the D.C. ban in his budget proposals, making its initial omission from a GOP-controlled subcommittee version notable. Lawmakers in the District have enacted workarounds, but the congressional blockade remains a source of frustration.

Related Legislative Developments

Meanwhile, [the House approved a large-scale defense bill](#) on Friday, including a section to prevent military branches from testing recruits for marijuana as a condition of enlistment. However, proposed amendments to protect servicemembers from penalties for past marijuana use and allow veterans to access state medical marijuana programs were rejected.

Continuing Efforts

Advocates and lawmakers continue to push for reforms, highlighting the ongoing challenges and incremental progress in the complex landscape of cannabis legislation.