

Congressman Moves to Protect State-Legal Cannabis Businesses Amid Border Patrol Controversy in New Mexico

Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-NM) has introduced an amendment to a large-scale spending bill that would prevent U.S. border patrol agents from using federal funds to seize marijuana from state-licensed businesses. This move comes in response to recent controversies surrounding Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seizures of cannabis from legal operators in New Mexico.

Amendment Details

The proposed amendment, part of the 2025 Fiscal Year appropriations legislation for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), specifically prohibits the use of funds for seizing cannabis or cannabis products possessed, sold, or transferred by state-licensed cannabis distributors or businesses in states where cannabis is legal for recreational or medicinal use.

Background

Recent reports revealed that CBP agents had been seizing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cannabis from legal businesses in New Mexico, sparking outrage among local advocates and patients. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham expressed her concerns, stating that the recent surge in seizures was unjustified and negatively impacting legal operators in the state.

Impact on New Mexico

The controversy surrounding CBP seizures has prompted responses from various levels of government. The proposed amendment seeks to protect legal cannabis businesses in New Mexico from federal interference, ensuring that patients and consumers have access to safely regulated products.

Next Steps

The amendment will undergo review by the House Rules Committee, which is expected to decide on its inclusion in the appropriations bill. If approved, the amendment could provide much-needed relief to the cannabis industry in New Mexico and serve as a model for other states facing similar challenges.

Rep. Vasquez's amendment reflects a growing bipartisan effort to address issues related to cannabis legalization at the federal level. By preventing federal funds from being used to seize cannabis from legal businesses, the amendment aims to protect state-licensed operators and promote a more equitable cannabis policy nationwide.