

California Lawmakers Vote Down Bill Removing Cannabis Protections for Law Enforcement Jobs

On Wednesday, a California Assembly committee rejected a Senate-passed bill aimed at removing employment protections for law enforcement officers who legally use cannabis off-duty. The Assembly's Labor and Employment Committee voted 3-2 in favor, but with not enough votes to advance the measure.

Bill Details and Sponsor

Senate Bill 1264, initially introduced as a minor amendment, was later revised to remove cannabis protections for specific law enforcement positions. Assemblymember Shannon Grove (R) sponsored the bill, expressing concerns over legal liabilities for local governments if officers tested positive for cannabis after incidents.

Arguments For and Against

Proponents, including law enforcement groups, argued the bill clarified employer rights to test for cannabis. Opponents, including labor unions and drug policy reform groups, compared off-duty cannabis use to alcohol, suggesting existing policies were sufficient. They argued that the bill might set a precedent for further rollbacks in employment protections.

Future Prospects

The bill's sponsor requested a reconsideration at a later date, leaving its future uncertain. Meanwhile, the California Senate had passed the bill with a 31-3 vote. Assemblymember Liz Ortega (D) proposed an amendment for a 2028 expiration date, aiming for a balanced approach.

Broader Context

This decision occurs amid ongoing debates in California over cannabis regulation and its impact on various professions. Concurrently, lawmakers are considering other drug policy reforms, including pilot programs for psilocybin treatment for veterans and first responders.

Email: info@cannabisriskmanager.com | Phone: +415-226-4060

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