

2024 Election: Cannabis Reform Progresses in Key States

Cannabis Reform Gains Momentum in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin as Polls Indicate Broad Voter Support

New polling reveals a growing wave of support for cannabis reform among voters in the critical swing states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. As the 2024 election approaches, cannabis is emerging as a key issue for presidential candidates, with recent data highlighting the shifting attitudes of the electorate.

The research, conducted by The Tarrance Group and commissioned by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, shows that a substantial majority of voters in these states favor cannabis reform. According to Marijuana Moment, which first reported the findings, 83% of voters in Michigan and Wisconsin, and 79% in Pennsylvania, support the legalization of medical cannabis. Furthermore, support for adult-use legalization ranges from 58% to 64%, while 67% to 71% of voters back banking reforms for cannabis businesses. Only a small minority, between 14% and 20%, believe cannabis should remain a Schedule I drug under federal law.

Michigan: A Leader in Cannabis Reform

In Michigan, where both medical and adult-use cannabis are already legal, voter support for the industry remains robust. The poll indicates that 83% of Michigan voters back medical cannabis, while 64% support recreational use. Additionally, 67% of voters favor cannabis banking reforms, underscoring a desire for safer and more regulated financial services within the industry. Michigan's strong support for cannabis reflects the state's established legal framework and the public's growing comfort with regulated cannabis use.

Pennsylvania: Growing Support for Expanded Cannabis Laws

In Pennsylvania, where only medical cannabis is currently legal, the polling data shows significant support for further reform. A notable 79% of voters support medical cannabis legalization, and 58% are in favor of adult-use legalization. Additionally, 70% of Pennsylvania voters back giving cannabis businesses access to banking services, aligning with Governor Josh Shapiro's ongoing efforts to expand cannabis reform in the state. The data suggests that Pennsylvanians are increasingly ready for broader legalization measures, which could be a pivotal issue in upcoming state elections.

Wisconsin: Voter Patience Wears Thin

Wisconsin, which has yet to implement a comprehensive cannabis program, shows the strongest voter support for reform among the three states surveyed. An overwhelming 83% of Wisconsin voters favor medical cannabis legalization, and 62% support adult-use legalization. Despite this widespread public support, the Wisconsin legislature has been slow to pass significant cannabis reforms. The polling data indicates growing impatience among voters, with 71% supporting banking reforms for cannabis businesses.

As public pressure mounts, Wisconsin's lawmakers may soon face increasing demands to align state policies with the will of the electorate.

National Implications and Political Reactions

The growing momentum for cannabis reform in these key states comes amid broader national discussions on the issue. Recent reports from the Business of Cannabis indicate that North American cannabis stocks are rallying, fueled by signs that prominent political figures, including former President Donald Trump, may be warming to the idea of federal cannabis reform. During a press conference at Mar-a-Lago on August 8, Trump hinted at supporting cannabis decriminalization, marking a significant shift in his previous stance on the issue.

Meanwhile, Trump's running mate, JD Vance, has sparked controversy with his remarks at a Wisconsin campaign event, where he claimed that "marijuana bags" are being laced with fentanyl, posing a danger to youth. Vance linked this issue to Biden administration border policies, although advocates argue that such claims are exaggerated and highlight the need for regulated cannabis markets with testing to prevent contamination.

Despite his opposition to legalization, Vance supports states' rights to set their own cannabis laws but has voted against cannabis banking reform. His comments have drawn criticism from cannabis advocates, including David Culver, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs at the US Cannabis Council (USCC), who stated, "The only way to ensure that cannabis is safe and out of reach for teens is legalization and regulation. We urge Senator Vance to reconsider how to best address his concerns about cannabis. The drug war has failed, and a majority of states have adopted a new approach that works."

As the 2024 election draws nearer, cannabis reform continues to gain traction in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. With broad voter support in these swing states, the issue is likely to play a significant role in shaping the political landscape. As public opinion shifts, policymakers and candidates will need to address the growing demand for cannabis reform and the implications it holds for the future of U.S. drug policy.

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