

Will Florida Pass Its Adult-Use Cannabis Legalization Measure?

Donald Trump Endorses Florida's Adult-Use Cannabis Ballot Measure, Amendment 3

In a surprising development, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has publicly announced his support for Amendment 3, Florida's adult-use marijuana ballot measure, set for a vote on November 5. The measure aims to legalize recreational cannabis use across the state, and Trump's endorsement has added an unexpected twist to the ongoing debate over legalization.

"As a Floridian, I will be voting YES on Amendment 3 this November," Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social, on September 8.

Supporters of the amendment are hopeful that Trump's backing will sway undecided voters, who currently represent 15% of the electorate, to vote in favor of the measure.

Amendment 3 Hangs in the Balance

With only weeks left before the election, polls show a tight race for the future of adult-use cannabis in Florida. Since ballot measures in Florida require at least 60% of the vote to pass, every vote is crucial.

Recent polls offer a mixed picture. A Fox News survey found that 66% of Floridians support Amendment 3, while a Florida Atlantic University poll showed only 56% planning to vote "yes." The slim margin indicates the initiative's outcome could go either way.

Funding, however, is heavily tilted [in favor of Amendment 3](#). Smart & Safe Florida, a political action committee (PAC) led by cannabis giant Trulieve, has raised over \$100 million as of September 20. Meanwhile, the two main anti-cannabis PACs—Governor Ron DeSantis' Florida Freedom Fund and Keep Florida Clean—have raised less than \$20 million combined.

Major Donors and Industry Opposition

The campaign for and against Amendment 3 has attracted big-money donors. Trulieve Cannabis Corp., based in Tallahassee, has contributed at least \$87 million to the pro-legalization PAC, Smart & Safe Florida. On the opposition side, Ken Griffin, the billionaire founder of Citadel Hedge Fund, has donated \$12 million to Keep Florida Clean, with a promise of \$7 million more.

Adding to the opposition are Florida's hemp executives, who have pledged \$5 million to defeat the measure. The hemp industry has been at odds with the state government since Governor DeSantis vetoed Senate Bill 1698 in June, which would have banned intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids. Some in the industry view supporting DeSantis' anti-cannabis stance as an opportunity to protect their interests.

Florida's Cannabis Market: Dominated by Major Players

A review of Florida's cannabis market in November 2023 revealed a landscape controlled by multi-state operators (MSOs). Of the 603 medical marijuana dispensaries across the state, 21% are owned by Trulieve, while the remaining majority belong to other large players like Verano Holdings Corp., Ayr Wellness, Curaleaf Holdings, and Surterra.

Currently, nearly 4% of Florida's population is registered as medical marijuana patients. Should Amendment 3 pass, it is expected that most of these medical operators would expand into the adult-use market, potentially deepening the hold MSOs have over the state's cannabis industry.

What's in (and Missing from) Amendment 3?

Amendment 3, as written, would allow adults 21 years and older to purchase, possess, and use cannabis products for personal consumption. It also permits existing medical marijuana treatment centers to cultivate and distribute these products under the state's regulated system.

Notably, the amendment does not include specifics on key regulatory issues, such as the types and costs of adult-use licenses, social equity provisions, or limits on cannabis potency. These omissions have drawn criticism, but the measure was crafted this way to avoid a single-subject challenge under Florida's constitution. The amendment passed a review by the state Supreme Court in April 2024.

Financial Impact and Potential Delays

If approved, Amendment 3 would take effect on May 5, 2025. Initial fiscal estimates suggest adult-use marijuana sales would generate \$197 million in tax revenue through state and local sales taxes. Should the state Legislature impose an excise tax on recreational cannabis, that figure could rise substantially.

Despite the potential economic boost, political challenges remain. Both the Florida Legislature and Governor DeSantis have expressed opposition to recreational marijuana, which could delay implementation even if the measure passes. Historically, when Florida approved medical marijuana in 2016, it took nearly two years for the program to fully roll out. Experts predict a similar delay for adult-use cannabis.

Trump's National Cannabis Position and Future Outlook

Beyond the Florida amendment, Trump's endorsement of cannabis reform on a national level is also drawing attention. In his Truth Social post, Trump hinted at broader support for marijuana reform, including efforts to reclassify cannabis from a Schedule 1 to a Schedule 3 substance under the U.S. Controlled Substances Act.

"As President, we will continue to focus on research to unlock the medical uses of marijuana, move it to Schedule 3, and work with Congress to pass common-sense laws, including safe banking for state-authorized companies," Trump wrote.

With both major 2024 presidential candidates—Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris—voicing support for marijuana reform, the U.S. cannabis industry may be heading toward more favorable political and economic conditions in the years to come.

The Fate of Amendment 3

As Florida voters prepare to head to the polls on November 5, Amendment 3's fate remains uncertain. With a close race and high stakes, Trump's endorsement has added a new dynamic to the debate over adult-use

cannabis legalization. Should the measure pass, it could set the stage for a new era in Florida's cannabis industry, but political hurdles remain that could slow the transition to full legalization.

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