

# DeSantis Warns Recreational Cannabis Could Harm Quality of Life

## Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis Makes Last-Minute Push Against Amendment 3 Legalizing Recreational Cannabis

**West Palm Beach, FL** — Just days before the November general election, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis visited West Palm Beach on Wednesday to campaign against Amendment 3, a controversial measure that would legalize recreational marijuana statewide if passed. DeSantis voiced concerns about the impact of legal cannabis on quality of life in Florida, speaking at a roundtable with members of the Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Police Benevolent Association.

### Understanding Amendment 3 and Its Potential Impact

Amendment 3, appearing on Florida's ballot this November, would make it legal for adults over 21 to purchase, possess, and use marijuana without needing a medical card. If passed, this would position Florida as one of the few southern states to legalize recreational cannabis, potentially bringing sweeping changes to the state's approach to cannabis regulation and consumption.

Supporters of the amendment argue that legalizing marijuana would increase safety by regulating a substance many residents already use, while also providing a new revenue stream for the state. The group Smart & Safe Florida, which sponsored Amendment 3, estimates that Florida could see hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue from legal recreational cannabis sales. The potential economic benefits have attracted bipartisan support from some state lawmakers.

However, DeSantis warned that increased cannabis use in public spaces could tarnish Florida's reputation as a family-friendly destination and hurt its critical tourism sector. He cautioned that "revenue from tourism would go down," negatively impacting other businesses that rely on family and tourist foot traffic.

### Concerns Over Public Use and Quality of Life

One of DeSantis's primary arguments against Amendment 3 is the lack of explicit restrictions on public cannabis use. DeSantis expressed apprehension about the potential for marijuana to become pervasive in shared public spaces, stating that it could affect the daily lives of Floridians and discourage family-centered activities.

He specifically raised concerns about recreational marijuana use on public beaches, in parks, and other areas that draw visitors and residents alike. DeSantis argued that people should feel comfortable in these spaces without concerns about cannabis consumption nearby.

### Economic Concerns and Potential Risks to Tourism

Beyond public use concerns, DeSantis highlighted potential economic downsides of recreational cannabis. He warned that legalizing marijuana could dissuade tourists, a key driver of Florida's economy, from visiting. "What are you losing for restaurants? What are you losing for other things because this is now a part of Florida in ways that may be off-putting to a lot of tourists?" he questioned. According to DeSantis, the negative perception surrounding public marijuana use might deter family-oriented visitors, causing a net loss for Florida's economy.

### **Support for Amendment 3 and Industry Advocacy**

Kim Rivers, CEO of Trulieve—Florida's largest medical marijuana operator with over 150 dispensaries across the state—has been an active proponent of Amendment 3. Trulieve has invested \$141 million into the campaign to pass the amendment, with Rivers advocating that the existing framework for medical marijuana regulation could seamlessly transition into the adult-use market. She highlighted that Florida already has strict safety protocols for medical cannabis and expressed confidence that these same standards would apply to recreational marijuana, should Amendment 3 pass.

Rivers has argued that legalization often leads to better regulation and decreased rates of underage marijuana use, citing studies suggesting that access through regulated means discourages illegal and unregulated consumption.

### **DeSantis Criticizes Corporate Influence on the Amendment**

In his remarks, DeSantis also took aim at Trulieve, noting that as a publicly traded corporation, it would stand to gain financially from the passage of Amendment 3. He questioned the company's motives, pointing out the large sum spent on advocacy and alleging that Trulieve's support of the amendment may be profit-driven rather than centered on public welfare. According to DeSantis, the financial backing for the amendment reflects the corporation's potential for increased profit from a broader cannabis market.

### **Polling Shows Mixed Support for Amendment 3**

Recent polling data shows a divided public opinion on the amendment. According to a recent University of North Florida poll, around 66% of surveyed Floridians are in favor of passing Amendment 3, which would surpass the 60% supermajority required for constitutional amendments in Florida. However, a separate poll by the Florida Chamber indicated support at 57%, suggesting a more uncertain outcome.

### **Looking Ahead: The Future of Cannabis in Florida**

As the election nears, Amendment 3 remains a focal point for both advocates and opponents, with each side presenting strong arguments. For proponents, legalization would mean increased tax revenue, improved public safety through regulation, and social justice benefits, such as reducing marijuana-related arrests. They also argue that the measure could bring Florida in line with other states that have legalized recreational cannabis, benefiting both residents and the state economy.

Opponents, led by DeSantis, argue that recreational cannabis could lower the state's quality of life, deter tourists, and have unintended social consequences. They caution that increased public use could harm Florida's reputation and raise enforcement and regulatory challenges. Additionally, they point to the corporate interests behind the amendment as a potential red flag, suggesting the measure may not prioritize the public's best interests.

With polls indicating a tight race, the fate of recreational marijuana in Florida will depend on voter turnout and sentiment in the final days leading up to the election. As Floridians prepare to head to the polls,

Amendment 3 continues to spark debate over its potential impact on the state's economy, lifestyle, and public spaces.

Email: [info@cannabisriskmanager.com](mailto:info@cannabisriskmanager.com) | Phone: +415-226-4060

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved