

# Texas Cracks Down on Intoxicating Hemp Products

## Texas Remains Firm Against Marijuana Legalization as Other States Move Forward

About half of the United States has fully legalized marijuana, but Texas isn't one of them, and the state is not moving in that direction. Since Gov. Greg Abbott signed a bill legalizing the production and sale of low-concentrate hemp products, many North Texas police departments have intensified their crackdown on smoke shops selling products exceeding legal limits. This growing opposition to hemp products is now mirrored in the Texas Legislature, where a new bill aims to impose a complete ban on all THC products.

## Texas Legalized Low-Concentrate Hemp in 2019, but Concerns Over Abuse Persist

In 2019, Abbott signed House Bill 1325, legalizing hemp products with a THC level of 0.3% or less. Any product exceeding this threshold is considered illegal marijuana. This legislation followed the 2018 passage of the federal Farm Bill, which legalized industrial hemp and opened the doors for intoxicating hemp products to enter the Texas market. THC, the chemical responsible for the euphoric effects of marijuana, is now widely available in various concentrated forms, including gummies, vapes, and beverages. As a result, smoke shops have stocked thousands of these products, some of which lawmakers argue exceed legal limits and pose risks to consumers.

## Critics Say THC Products Are Being Misrepresented and Marketed to Minors

Even at legal levels, hemp-derived THC products can produce mild psychoactive effects. However, critics are more concerned about mislabeled products with high THC content being sold under the guise of legal limits. Lawmakers also argue that minors are being exposed to these high-potency products.

## Texas Law Enforcement Intensifies Crackdown on Smoke Shops Selling Illegal THC

Last week, Carrollton police reported the seizure of "3,277 grams of various THC products, 2,624 grams of various psilocybin products, and 517 grams of marijuana" from CBD Vape Shop on Old Denton Road. The shop's owner was arrested and now faces multiple felony charges.

"This case reflects our department's commitment to addressing businesses that engage in illegal narcotics sales, particularly those involving juveniles," read a statement from the Carrollton Police Department.

Last September, a series of raids conducted by the Allen Police Department and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration led to the seizure of high-THC hemp products from nine smoke shops across the city. Police Chief Steve Dye claimed some confiscated products contained THC levels exceeding 15%. The department has since continued monitoring local smoke shops and advocating for stricter state regulations.

## **Texas Lawmakers Divided Over THC Regulations as Senate Bill 3 Gains Support**

Texas lawmakers remain divided on THC regulation. While Abbott has yet to take a firm stance, Patrick has prioritized banning THC products altogether.

Senate Bill 3, introduced by Sen. Charles Perry (R-Lubbock), seeks to ban all THC products, which could result in the closure of numerous Texas smoke shops that rely on THC concentrates. The bill does not impact the sale or distribution of CBD products or medical marijuana laws, but it could still disrupt thousands of businesses and consumers.

## **Hemp Industry Advocates Warn of Economic and Consumer Freedom Consequences**

Jim Higdon, co-founder of THC gummy company Corn Bread, believes the proposed ban is an overreaction that sets the cannabis industry back. While acknowledging that some retailers exploit legal loopholes, he warns that an outright ban would negatively affect law-abiding businesses and consumers.

The Texas hemp industry generates approximately \$8 billion in revenue and employs over 50,000 Texans. Industry advocates argue that instead of an outright ban, lawmakers should focus on stricter regulations to prevent bad actors from exploiting the system.

As Texas lawmakers debate the future of THC products, the battle between law enforcement, business owners, and legislators continues, leaving the fate of the hemp industry in uncertainty.

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