

Texas Senate Passes Ban on Hemp Derived THC

Legislation Moves Forward with Overwhelming Support

The Texas Senate has passed Senate Bill 3, a measure that would impose a total ban on hemp-derived THC products. The bill, which was championed by one of the state's most influential politicians, was approved with a 24-7 vote on Wednesday.

Potential Impact on Retailers and Consumers

If signed into law, the bill would make it illegal to sell hemp-derived THC products currently available in over 8,300 stores across Texas. The legislation represents a significant shift in the state's stance on hemp products, which have proliferated following the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill and subsequent state legislation in 2019.

Competing Legislation in the House

While the Senate has moved forward with a total ban, the Texas House is considering separate legislation, House Bill 28, which would impose stricter regulations without outright banning hemp-derived THC. It remains unclear when the House will take up the bill or how lawmakers will reconcile differences between the two measures before sending a final version to Gov. Greg Abbott.

Republican Support for Stricter Regulations

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has called Senate Bill 3 one of the most significant bills of his lengthy legislative career, emphasizing the need to remove hemp-derived THC products from the market. Republican state Sen. Charles Perry, the bill's lead sponsor, has expressed confidence that House lawmakers share the same priorities regarding THC regulation.

Industry Pushback and Regulatory Alternatives

Texas hemp businesses are urging legislators to consider alternative measures such as age restrictions and tamper-proof packaging rather than an outright prohibition. The industry has flourished in the state due to limited access to medical marijuana, making Texas one of the largest markets for hemp products.

Background on Hemp Legalization in Texas

Texas lawmakers initially embraced industrial hemp by passing a law in 2019 following the federal Farm Bill. However, like many other states, Texas has since seen an unexpected surge in intoxicating hemp-derived THC products, prompting the push for stricter regulations or a complete ban.

Next Steps for the Legislation

The fate of Senate Bill 3 now rests in the hands of the Texas House, where lawmakers must decide whether to proceed with a total ban or seek a compromise through regulation. The outcome will have far-reaching consequences for both businesses and consumers across the state.

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