

# Lawmakers Push DEA to Accelerate Cannabis Scheduling Review

While the Department of Health and Human Services recommended last summer that cannabis no longer be considered a Schedule I controlled substance, the DEA historically has demurred from taking that step.

## **Congressional Push**

Members of Congress on Wednesday once again pushed the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to follow through on guidance to remove marijuana from the top of its list of controlled substances.

## **Delayed Action**

It's been roughly eight months since the Department of Health and Human Services recommended that the DEA reclassify cannabis as a Schedule III drug under the Controlled Substances Act and more than a year since the Biden administration directed federal agencies to review the plant's classification.

## **Democratic Demands**

A group of Democrats led by Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren told agency administrator Anne Milgram in a letter dated Wednesday that it is time for the DEA to act.

## **Schedule III Recommendation**

The Controlled Substances Act ranks substances by their abuse potential and level of accepted medical use. Marijuana is currently listed under Schedule I, the highest enforcement level. Moving it to Schedule III would put it among substances with a moderate to low potential for dependence.

## **Calls for Complete Descheduling**

While moving cannabis to Schedule III would be a step forward, the lawmakers argue that the only way to remedy the consequences of marijuana prohibition is to deschedule it altogether.

## **Advocacy for Change**

Paul Armentano of NORML agrees that cannabis should be removed from the Controlled Substances Act entirely to align with state laws and acknowledge its safety profile.

## **DEA Resistance**

The DEA has a history of resisting rescheduling petitions, maintaining that cannabis should remain in Schedule I.

## **Congressional Pressure**

While members of Congress continue to pressure the DEA, the final authority lies with the agency. However, past actions suggest it may be reluctant to make significant changes.

Democrats urge the DEA to act swiftly and not to reject federal agency guidance. They see this as an opportunity for the administration to address decades of failed marijuana policy.

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