

Texas Looks to Ban THC Products After Legal Market Growth

Texas Considers Banning THC Products After Booming Hemp Market, Sparking Debate Over Public Health and Safety Concerns

HOUSTON — Just six years after Texas legalized hemp products, the state may be on the brink of reversing course with a proposal to ban most consumable hemp products, including THC-infused gummies, vapes, drinks, and chips. This proposed ban comes after key lawmakers raised concerns about abuses and safety issues linked to these products.

In April, the Texas Senate passed a bill that would outlaw nearly all consumable hemp products containing THC, the primary intoxicating compound in cannabis. The bill, passed with a 26-5 vote, is now under consideration in the state House. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a strong proponent of the ban, argued that such products were harmful to public health, particularly targeting children and young adults.

Texas Senate Passes Bill to Ban THC Products Amid Growing Concerns Over Public Health and Safety

Patrick comments reflect growing concerns among lawmakers who claim that the consumption of THC-infused products has led to an increase in mental health crises and addiction, especially among younger individuals.

The Texas hemp market has expanded significantly since 2018, when the U.S. Farm Bill legalized hemp and set the stage for states to regulate hemp production. Texas followed suit, and what was initially a law designed for non-consumable hemp products, such as ropes and textiles, inadvertently created a multibillion-dollar industry centered around consumable hemp products.

Growing Texas Hemp Market Faces Potential Shutdown as Lawmakers Seek to Curb Consumption

Since Texas legalized hemp, businesses selling consumable THC products have flourished, with products available at thousands of stores and gas stations. However, critics argue that while the law was intended to promote industrial hemp, it has also given rise to a highly profitable and largely unregulated market of THC-infused consumables.

Senator José Menéndez, a Democratic lawmaker from San Antonio, voted against the ban and advocated for more stringent regulations instead. He suggested that THC products be sold under strict regulations similar to liquor, including age restrictions and limits on the proximity of sales to schools and churches. Menéndez emphasized that regulating the industry could address safety concerns while still allowing adults to access these products responsibly.

Texas Hemp Market Estimated at \$8 Billion Annually Faces Uncertainty as Lawmakers Push for Ban

Supporters of the proposed ban, including Republican Senator Charles Perry of Lubbock, argue that the market for THC products, valued at up to \$8 billion annually, has created serious public health issues. While the revenue generated by the industry is significant, critics say the costs of addiction, mental health crises, and law enforcement efforts to address these issues outweigh the financial benefits.

Texas Faces Tension Over THC Ban, With Both Business Owners and Veterans Speaking Out Against Proposed Legislation

The debate over the proposed ban is not without its supporters and detractors. Many business owners and consumers argue that THC products have become an essential part of their lives. Melanne Carpenter, a Houston-area dispensary owner, has operated Serenity Organics for five years and believes that the solution is not banning THC products but enforcing stricter regulations.

“My customers are primarily between 40 and 60 years old, and most of them use hemp products for pain relief, anxiety, and sleep,” Carpenter said. She opposes sales to minors but believes the industry should be regulated, not shut down completely. If the ban passes, she says she would be forced to close her business.

Personal Stories From Veterans and Families Highlight the Benefits and Risks of THC Products

Veterans who have used THC products to manage chronic pain and PTSD have also spoken out against the proposed ban. Terence Jones, a former soldier who lost both legs and part of an arm in Afghanistan, shared his personal story of how THC products helped him manage pain and wean off opioids.

However, not all families share such positive experiences. Alexandra Hess of Houston testified before the Texas House committee, sharing the tragic story of her brother, who died after consuming intoxicating levels of THC products. Hess spoke passionately about the toll these products have taken on her family and expressed her support for the ban.

The Future of Texas Hemp Industry Hangs in the Balance as Debate Over Safety and Regulation Continues

As the Texas Legislature debates the future of THC consumables, the state’s hemp industry finds itself at a crossroads. Lawmakers, business owners, and concerned citizens alike are grappling with how to balance public health and safety with personal freedoms and the economic benefits of the hemp market. The outcome of this debate will determine whether Texas moves toward tighter restrictions, greater regulation, or a full ban on THC-infused products.

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