

# Ohio AG Approves Vote On Reversing Cannabis, Hemp Restrictions

## Ohio Attorney General Approves Revised Cannabis Referendum Petition After Initially Rejecting Misleading Submission

Ohio's attorney general, Dave Yost (R), has approved a resubmitted referendum petition aimed at blocking portions of a recently enacted marijuana and hemp law, after previously rejecting an earlier version he described as "misleading" to voters.

"Having carefully examined this submission, I conclude that the title and summary are fair and truthful statements of the proposed measure," Yost wrote in a letter to petition organizers on Wednesday. He clarified that his certification of the petition's title and summary does not constitute an endorsement of the measure's enforceability or constitutionality, but rather confirms that potential signers are properly informed of the law's material components.

## Ohioans for Cannabis Choice Seeks to Repeal Key Sections of Controversial Law Limiting Hemp Sales and Recriminalizing Marijuana Activities

The referendum, led by the advocacy group Ohioans for Cannabis Choice, aims to overturn significant portions of S.B. 56, a law signed by Governor Mike DeWine (R) that scaled back voter-approved cannabis rights and banned the sale of consumable hemp products outside licensed dispensaries.

Attorney General Yost had initially rejected the petition, citing "omissions and misstatements" that could mislead voters about the law's scope and effects. Following revisions to the petition, the attorney general approved the latest submission, allowing the campaign to begin gathering the approximately 250,000 valid signatures required to place the referendum on the ballot.

Governor DeWine and Senator Jay Hottinger, who sponsored the restrictive law, have criticized the referendum campaign, arguing that the legislation protects public health and regulates an untested intoxicating hemp market.

## Controversial Ohio Law Would Recriminalize Certain Marijuana Activities and Eliminate Anti-Discrimination Protections

S.B. 56, signed into law in December, includes several controversial measures: it recriminalizes some marijuana activity previously legalized under Ohio's 2023 voter-approved initiative, removes anti-discrimination protections for cannabis consumers, and restricts the sale of intoxicating hemp products to licensed dispensaries.

The law also bans smoking cannabis at outdoor public locations such as bar patios and allows landlords to prohibit vaping at rental properties, with violations classified as misdemeanors. In addition, it repeals

proposed regulatory frameworks for hemp beverages, instead instituting a broad prohibition on sales outside marijuana dispensaries.

## **Advocates Warn Referendum Could Protect Voter-Approved Cannabis Rights and Prevent Disruption to Ohio's Hemp Industry**

Supporters of the referendum argue that S.B. 56 undermines the will of Ohio voters and could effectively cripple the state's hemp industry. They note that the law's restrictions would criminalize adults who legally purchase cannabis from neighboring states and remove legal safeguards that protect consumers from discrimination in areas such as child custody, professional licensing, and eligibility for organ transplants.

## **Path Forward for Ohio Cannabis Referendum Hinges on Signature Collection and Legal Challenges**

If Ohioans for Cannabis Choice successfully collects the required signatures by the deadline—which coincides with the date S.B. 56 is set to take effect, the law would be temporarily blocked until voters have a chance to approve or reject it at the ballot box.

The campaign has also flagged pending legal disputes over signature validation, asserting that tens of thousands of signatures were improperly invalidated by state officials, including those from inactive voters or collected by out-of-state petition circulators. Advocates say the state's interpretation of petition rules could disenfranchise more than a million Ohioans who signed in support of cannabis reform.

## **Federal and State Hemp Regulations Intersect as Ohio Law Aligns with New THC Restrictions**

S.B. 56 also incorporates restrictions designed to comply with a federal hemp law included in an appropriations package signed by President Donald Trump. Under the law, hemp products containing more than 0.4 mg of total THC per container or synthetic cannabinoids may only be sold in licensed marijuana dispensaries.

While the federal law allows a one-year implementation window, Ohio's legislation takes effect sooner, and Governor DeWine vetoed a provision that would have temporarily allowed sales of intoxicating hemp beverages until the end of 2026. Advocates argue that the law unnecessarily restricts consumer access and jeopardizes the growing hemp market in the state.

## **Referendum Could Restore Ohio Voters' Ability to Shape Cannabis Policy Amid Legal Uncertainty**

With the referendum approved for signature collection, Ohioans for Cannabis Choice hopes to restore the public's ability to determine cannabis policy. The outcome could protect voter-approved marijuana rights, preserve consumer protections, and provide a clearer regulatory path for hemp products in the state.

The campaign's approval by the attorney general marks a significant step forward, though legal and procedural hurdles remain. Observers note that the success of the referendum could influence future debates over marijuana and hemp policy not only in Ohio but across other states with restrictive cannabis laws.

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

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved