

NY Warns Illegal Cannabis: 'We Have a Lock with Your Name on It'

In a decisive move to combat illegal cannabis operations, New York City Mayor Eric Adams initiated the closure of 20 illicit stores on Tuesday, marking the commencement of intensified efforts to dismantle underground cannabis networks in the Big Apple.

Cracking Down on Crime Hotspots

Addressing the press in a stern tone, Mayor Adams highlighted the detrimental impact of illegal cannabis shops on public safety and quality of life in the city. These establishments have increasingly become hubs for criminal activity, prompting the city's resolve to take swift action. Mayor Adams emphasized, "Our message is clear: We want to close them down," underscoring the city's determination to restore order.

A Clear Warning to Offenders

During a live press conference featuring a raid demonstration at a Lower Manhattan shop, Mayor Adams delivered a direct warning to offending shop owners: "We have a lock with your name on it." This unequivocal message served as a stark reminder to illicit operators throughout the five boroughs that their illegal activities will not be tolerated.

Sheriff Miranda Leads the Charge

Sheriff Anthony Miranda, overseeing the raid remotely, highlighted the egregious violations discovered at the targeted New City Smoke Shop. Selling unlicensed cannabis, cigarettes, and mushrooms packaged to appeal to younger demographics, the store flouted multiple statutes under the new laws and protections. Sheriff Miranda's decisive actions underscored the resolve of law enforcement to uphold regulations and safeguard the community.

Enhanced Law Enforcement Authority

The fiscal year 2025 state budget, enacted in April, granted increased authority to local law enforcement agencies to combat illegal cannabis operations. This empowering legislation enables the sheriff's office and the NYPD to shutter unlicensed cannabis stores for up to a year. Mayor Adams clarified that while the NYPD would conduct raids, it would require deputization by the sheriff's office.

Long-Term Battle Against Illicit Operations

Despite newfound powers and heightened enforcement efforts, Mayor Adams acknowledged the ongoing struggle against unlicensed cannabis operators. With an estimated 1,500 illegal shops in NYC, eradicating them completely remains a formidable challenge. Adams tempered expectations, emphasizing the need for sustained enforcement measures to effectively combat the underground cannabis market.

Legislative Measures and Proposed Penalties

In tandem with enforcement actions, New York lawmakers are deliberating on legislation to impose stricter penalties on businesses engaged in illegal cannabis sales. Proposed bill S8847 aims to revoke licenses for selling cigarettes, alcohol, and lottery tickets from businesses caught selling unlicensed cannabis. Governor Kathy Hochul has also proposed measures to empower state authorities to close down illegal pot shops and impose hefty fines of up to \$200,000.

Continued Support for Legal Cannabis Initiatives

Amidst the crackdown on illicit operations, efforts to support legal cannabis initiatives remain a priority. Governor Hochul's proposal and the creation of a \$200 million public-private fund in 2022 demonstrate a commitment to fostering a fair and equitable legal cannabis market, ensuring opportunities for social equity applicants.

Mayor Adams' resolute actions signal a turning point in the fight against illegal cannabis operations in New York City, underscoring the city's commitment to promoting public safety and regulatory compliance in the burgeoning cannabis industry.

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